Community-University Research Partnerships: Reflections on the Canadian Social Economy Experience

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Peter V. Hall and Ian MacPherson, Editors

University of Victoria

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This eBook explores lessons for community-university research partnerships by reflecting on the experiences, achievements and challenges of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP). Between 2006 and 2012, the six regional nodes and the national hub of CSERP were funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to conduct research on the social economy in Canada. This provided an unprecedented level of resources and pan-Canadian experimentation within a collaborative model of engagement, knowledge creation, sectoral (self) definition and policy development through research.

Several characteristics of the social economy render it a challenging field in which to build community-university partnerships. The social economy is highly diverse; while some parts of the social economy are professionalized and have formalized organizational structures that interact well with the university sector; important parts are emergent, informal and highly localized. At the same time, each of the CSERPs had to grapple with longstanding questions about building and sustaining community-university partnerships. The great diversity in the regional contexts, and hence the variation in the approaches taken to partnership-building and engagement by the CSERPs, provides an opportunity to draw out insights on the process and challenges of forging (and maintaining) practitioner-university engagement.

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Peter Hall and Ian MacPherson
Vancouver and Victoria
September 2011

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Learning from the Social Economy Community-University Research Partnerships

Peter Hall with Janel Smith, Aliez Kay, Rupert Downing, Ian MacPherson, Annie McKitrick

The National Hub
The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships

Canadians and their communities face considerable economic, social and ecological challenges. In urban Canada, great wealth exists alongside exclusion: new labour market entrants, often immigrants and urban aboriginals, find it hard to secure stable employment; low income families cannot find affordable housing and childcare; and the social safety net fails many with acute and chronic health problems. Much of rural Canada is still subject to the boom-bust cycles of the resource economy, facing doctor and housing shortages in one period and youth out-migration in the next. Many aboriginal and First Nations communities are bypassed by the developments that do occur, but they are still left to bear the ecological burdens of the same. These challenges are not a temporary feature of the Great Recession. While some challenges are very old, others are quite new, such as those resulting from man-made climate change. What marks the contemporary challenges is the great unevenness in their distribution, alongside a great unwillingness on the part of governments to raise the taxes needed to address inequality through strengthened social programs.

The promise of the Social Economy is that it provides a set of principles, practices, relationships and organizations that will allow individuals and communities to negotiate the new context more successfully, to ameliorate and begin to reverse its worst effects, and to propose and experiment with alternative ways of regulation, organization and delivery. Some of the principles, practices, relationships and organizations of the Social Economy are very old, found for example in the co-operative movement, amongst First Nations and in the charitable and voluntary sectors. Others are much newer, found for example in the co-construction of supportive housing and childcare policies, and in the emerging social enterprise movement.

Research has a vital role to play in supporting the elaboration and expansion of these principles, practices, relationships and organizations. The idea of developing a major initiative into researching the Social Economy and into fostering its greater development in Canada, particularly in English-speaking Canada (the concept already being well understood in Québec), began

primarily among "practitioners." During the last months of the federal Liberal administration of Paul Martin (2003-2006), the leadership of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network and *Le Chantier de l'économie sociale* successfully promoted the allocation of a $132,000,000 investment for the development of the Social Economy in Canada, including funds for capacity building in the Social Economy.

One aspect of this programme was an investment of $15,000,000 in the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to further research into the Social Economy. The general programme was cancelled in all provinces except Quebec (where agreements were already in place) by the Conservative administration that took office in 2006. The funding for capacity building within the sector was also cancelled, a decision that undermined the ability of many organizations to engage fully in, and benefit from, the ongoing research. The funding for the research programme continued, although discretionary funds to be used for emerging research activities identified during the life of the research programme were cancelled.

These research funds were used to initiate the call for proposals for what became the six regional Nodes and the national Hub (see Table 1.1), also known as the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERPs). The model chosen by SSHRC for these research partnerships was by then the well-established model of Community-University Research Alliances (CURAs). Through "a process of ongoing collaboration and mutual learning,"community-university research alliances are intended to "foster innovative research, training and the creation of new knowledge in areas of importance for the social, cultural or economic development of Canadian communities" (SSHRC, 2008). The funding provided an unprecedented level of resources and pan-Canadian experimentation within this collaborative model of engagement, knowledge creation, sectoral (self-)definition and policy development through research.

Each of the Nodes and the Hub were awarded funding as the result of a peer-reviewed process, the same kind of process SSHRC employs in making all its awards. Research partnerships, as opposed to projects or even collaborations, imply an ongoing relationship. The CSERPs are ongoing in the sense that half of them built directly on pre-existing relationships and networks of academics and practitioners, and as they end, many have morphed, or are morphing, into new research partnerships to ensure that an institutional and practical legacy remains. Each Node developed its own research programme, reflecting regional priorities and aspirations, while complicating the task of creating subsequent national initiatives. The Nodes were understandably very concerned about developing consensuses among participants working together, sometimes for the first time, about the specific needs of their developing research programmes. The cancellation of the discretionary funds also significantly limited the flexibility for

implementing the programme originally, and wisely, contemplated by SSHRC for the development of the programme.

Each of the partnerships grappled with long-established questions about the division of labour in knowledge production; the different regional, institutional, cultural and organizational contexts of practitioners, academics and other participants; and the challenges of establishing priorities and allocating resources in multi-partner collaborations. In addition to these questions, several characteristics of the Social Economy render it a particularly challenging, and also fertile, field in which to build community-university partnerships. The Social Economy is highly diverse; while some parts are professionalized and have formalized organizational structures that interact well with the university sector, other important parts are emergent, informal and highly localized. Such partnerships include community organizations, as well as their broader publics, while the university component includes faculty and students. Funding agencies and governments are also important stakeholders in these partnerships. These characteristics raise significant challenges for building and sustaining community-university partnerships.

The CSERPs have generated a great deal of valuable research and sector-wide reflection; but, it is not our goal to review those research outputs here. Instead, they also provide an opportunity to draw out additional insights on the process and challenges of forging (and maintaining) practitioner-university engagement. This eBook explores such lessons in the practice of engaged research.

This chapter starts with a more general discussion of the notions of partnership and engagement in research, drawing on literature from OECD countries. We argue that engagement is a qualitatively distinct form of partnership. Whereas partnership entails sharing within existing institutional arrangements, engagement necessarily implies attention to changing institutional arrangements when appropriate. With this distinction in mind, we propose a set of eight categories for understanding "engaged research partnerships." The chapters that follow illustrate that innovative research practices are to be found in the Social Economy partnerships, confirming for us that engagement can and did indeed happen within the CURA research format. At the same time, our criteria and the chapters also highlight some of the ways that engagement was frustrated by the institutional context of the partners. The chapter concludes with some observations about the role that the particular institutional contexts governing SSHRC, academics and practitioners played in shaping the research partnerships described in the subsequent chapters.

Perspectives on Research Partnership and Engagement

The issues of university-community partnership and engagement have become progressively more prominent in both national and international forums of higher education. Indeed, "the changing nature of knowledge production, global issues and the role of education is affecting the intellectual strategies, relationships, societal roles and expectations that we attribute to our universities," (Holland & Ramaley 2008, p. 33). Increasingly, universities are asserting themselves as researchers, teachers, collaborators and active citizens in communities across the globe. The objectives of this involvement are both to serve and to create support from the public by connecting research, teaching and service to help solve community problems, while contributing to capacity-building, sustainability, and economic, environmental and social development (Prins, 2006; Toof, 2006; Ramaley, 2002; Boyte & Kari, 2000; Kellogg, 1999; Lerner & Simon, 1998).

As societal issues have grown in number and become more complex and "as higher education costs have increased, external constituents … have begun to pressure institutions of higher education to become more accountable and to work towards the common good," (Reinke & Walker 2005, p. 2). Harkavy (1998) argues that given this context universities are under increasing pressure to be "relevant" in solving today's complex challenges. Many universities have responded to these increased demands by adopting a community-oriented lens toward research activities and forming partnership and engagement relationships with communities.

The rhetoric alone of community-based engagement and partnership is not enough to constitute "genuine" research partnership and engagement; simply including engagement and partnership with communities as part of a university's mission statement or mandate, or on a research proposal (Stoecker, 2009), is not sufficient. Although "personnel involved in community work popularly espouse a community-driven approach to public engagement, their actions may support and/or contradict this philosophy," (Prins, 2006, p. 3). Our goal in this section is to elaborate on the notions of "research engagement" and "partnership" and to explore the question of what constitutes "genuine" or "authentic" engagement and partnership in research.

University-Community Partnership in Research

University-community partnership in research is essentially about making the most of research, ensuring it is relevant and useful while working within existing institutional arrangements. It represents a joint-working arrangement between two or more organizations, where at least one partner is representative of the university and at least one partner is from a community. At the centre

of genuine university-community partnership is the view that universities can and should be working with communities to produce research, that the research process should be collaborative and that research findings should be developed jointly with communities rather than communicated to them (Toof, 2006). Partnerships can deliver very useful and efficient results that are legitimate, and the act of partnership-making has itself become valued in our society. Partnerships (in this context) are intended to solve community problems and to build additional capacity, new ideas, management skills and technologies, while extending current, and examining new, areas of research.

At their best, partnerships exemplify the concept of "power with" as they enable individuals and institutions to accomplish more together than they could alone. Often, however, "hierarchies (i.e., disparities rooted in class, race, gender, status and institutional power) also shape, often unconsciously, routine interactions between and among university and community representatives," (Prins, 2006, p. 2). The institutional power and status of "expert" that university researchers hold, allows them both intentionally and unintentionally to influence the research agenda. Researchers may proceed "to make demands of community residents, to limit community partners' decision-making authority, to control and distribute resources inequitably, to use the community as a 'living laboratory' without improving conditions, and to expect community partners to adopt their suggestions," (Prins, 2006, p. 3). Therefore, at their worst partnerships can result in universities exerting and extending "power over" their community "partners" by acting as detached experts and/or by treating the community as a "laboratory," thereby leaving community members angry, distrustful and dissatisfied with the partnership (Reinke & Walker, 2005, p. 7).

Hence partnerships are not inherently transformative, in the sense that they do not necessarily endeavor to alter or transform institutional structures, norms and rules within universities, societal systems or communities of practice. Stoecker (2008) describes how university budget policies for charging overheads, course scheduling timelines, quality control, ethics review processes and hiring practices create barriers to more robust and empowering community-university research partnerships. From the standpoint of the community this can make the behaviour of universities appear paternalistic. Universities lack an easily discernable, coherent structure that can make it difficult for communities and community leaders to determine who to go to with problems and concerns and how to approach universities to partner in research, resulting in universities most often being the initiators and animators of partnerships rather than the other way round (Brisbin & Hunter, 2003; Mauresse, 2001).

Again, this highlights the importance of considering the institutional context or framework in which partnerships originate. An exploration into the funding mechanisms of a specific partnership can often provide particularly good

insights into the institutional context with respect to where funds originated, the process for awarding funds, and any rules and regulations around what funds can be used for, as well as who they can be used by. Such questions speak to issues of authority and legitimacy in research partnerships. In some cases community partners can be forced to conform to traditional conceptions of what constitutes research and to follow the accepted norms of the university in order for the research to go forward due to the fact that grant requirements may be embedded in the university structure. It should also be noted that community partners may seek to enter into certain research partnerships in order to push forward their own agendas. Universities, despite their best intentions are further constrained in the types of research partnerships that they can pursue due to the requirements of other governmental, funding, community and practitioner organizations.

Given these realities, research partnerships may go no further than agreement on a particular research problem followed by specialization into areas where it is deemed that "researchers" and "practitioners" or community members can most contribute. For partnerships to fulfill their promise, there is a "need for the university to be more conscious of the community's interest in them and for universities to develop a common language of mutual relevance and respect for each other's needs," (Temple, Story & Delaforce, 2005, p. 4). Similarly, communities and practitioners must also be sensitive to the demands on their university colleagues such as the pressure to publish in academic journals, requirements of the tenure process, faculty evaluations and formal rules around conducting research (e.g., ethics).

Why is Partnership a Good Thing?

Undertaking university-community partnerships can bring to the research "table" an expanded pool of diverse resources, skills, ideas and creativity. Partnerships can, thus, enable research to be conducted efficiently and effectively through the active involvement of community members.

This is significant given the fact that "the agenda has moved on from a desire to simply increase the general education of the population and the output of scientific research; there is now a greater concern to harness university education and research to specific economic and social objectives," (OECD, 1999, p. 9). Furthermore, in the "new model" of research "outcomes are articulated for teaching and research that are responsive to emerging issues," (Temple, Story, & Delaforce, 2005, p. 2). Partnerships provide avenues for researchers to respond to the inherently emergent properties of many of today's global concerns. They help in framing the scope of research by ensuring that the "right" (most relevant, useful and pressing) questions are addressed through the research partnership.

In his work Ridley (2001) notes that partnerships imply a commitment on the part of the university and community partners to reach a common goal(s)

through the joint provision of complementary resources and expertise. Even though specialization can limit the degree of joint collaboration and cross-sectoral communication in a partnership it can also be a positive aspect of partnership by seeking to involve those with the specific skills and expertise in the areas of research in which they can most significantly contribute. Likewise, as partnerships usually contain a defined and set research agenda, they can help to deliver a focused and realizable "package" of deliverables to communities. This can help the community to better, or more effectively, "tackle" multifaceted and complex issues within the community; identify priority "at-risk" areas; address diverse community needs and challenges; and conduct needs and issue assessments (McNall, Reed, Brown, & Allen, 2008).

Finally, partnerships can also "provide opportunities for students to learn about urban [and/or rural] problems first-hand, while at the same time developing leadership, communication, problem-solving and research skills," (Reinke & Walker, 2005, p. 7). Students are able to develop an enhanced sense of civic activism and responsibility in addition to the skills they garner that can carry forward into all aspects of their lives, including future employment and participation within their own communities. The opportunity to prepare students to be engaged and active citizens is a factor in explaining why partnerships are considered so favourably due to the perceived positive "spill-over" effects of such exercises.

University-Community Engagement in Research

Engagement is a distinctive approach to research in that it "recognizes that some learning or discovery outcomes require access to external entities with distinctive knowledge and expertise. The hallmark of engagement is the development of partnerships that ensure a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge between the university and the community," (Holland & Ramaley, 2008, p. 33). Therefore, at its core, engagement goes further than partnering, seeking a deeper relationship between the university and communities, by building long-term capacities and legacies that go beyond the purview of the research.

Engaging communities and practitioners in research is about much more than whether or not the university employs a "participatory action research" (PAR) method or espouses a commitment to university-community engagement and partnership in its mandate. Indeed, the literature on PAR itself calls attention to the importance of all aspects of the research process. Cunningham (1993) describes PAR as "a continuous process of research and learning in the researcher's long-term relationship with a problem" (p. 4). PAR is about engagement: (1) engaging research subjects (participants) as equal partners at all stages of research; (2) enabling community ownership over the research process

and its outcomes; and (3) adopting an advocacy and empowerment component that is transformative in nature (e.g., PAR is purposefully undertaken to achieve some specific social change or reform) (Balcazar et al., 2004; Taylor, 2004; Barnsley & Ellis, 1992; Stoecker, 2009).

In other words, engagement through research is one piece of a potentially much wider engagement between university and community. Engagement includes community-based research, but also adult and continuing education which extend university capacities into communities and experiential and service learning which extends the classroom into the community (see Jackson, 2008). Indeed, at a more general level, Hall (2009, p. 13) has made the argument that true community-university engagement entails a repositioning of the university as an active asset in communities: "In communities where institutions of higher education exist, the collective resources of these universities and colleges (students, academic staff, facilities, research funding, knowledge, skills and capacities to facilitate learning) represent our largest accessible, available and underutilized resource for community change and sustainability."

Hence, university-community engagement "describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity," (Carnegie 2006, n.p.). The emphasis placed on mutuality and reciprocity can be considered as core elements of engagement as it requires academic members to become a part of the community and community members to become a part of the research team. This helps to foster a unique working and learning environment before, during and after the research.

It is useful to conceive of engagement as comprising a spectrum or continuum of processes for communication, collaboration and relationship-building of which formal partnership-type arrangements are but one particular form. Underlying the notions of engagement are also a number of less-formal vehicles for carrying out research, including: networking, consultation, outreach, civic engagement, collaborative decision-making, working groups and community-university councils to name a few. Engagement forms, such as "network structures, are highly interdependent" and, thus, create highly interconnected forms of interaction that move "outside of traditional functional specialities to create new ways of working" (Muirhead & Woolcock, 2008, p. 19). Engagement is, thus, a broad, overarching framework that provides many avenues for rich university-community collaboration and cross-sectoral information exchange (Toof, 2006, p. 4).

Engagement "is the result of conscious choices made by the university" to get at, and alter, the underlying institutional culture of the university and how it functions (Reinke & Walker, 2005, p. 4). An "engaged university" must recognize and respect their community partners as equals, and faculty "must seek

to understand, respect and accept the community as it exists," (Reinke & Walker, 2005, p. 5). Engagement should, therefore, be viewed as an interactive process that builds relationships, promotes reciprocal learning processes, and, where appropriate, creates systematic change to facilitate well-being in communities.

These factors along with mutuality and reciprocity can be considered the "building blocks" of authentic engagement. From this perspective, "a key challenge in university-community engagement is to find ways of linking the new ideas generated by a university into a broader, more complex social system," (Low, 2008, p. 123). We propose to view the act of university-community engagement as a process-based and emergent form of inquiry and institutional transformation rather than a collection of research "problems" and/or projects that can be identified and solved.

Why is Engagement a Good Thing?

Academic-practitioner engagement is a process that requires power sharing, maintenance of equity, and flexibility in pursuing research goals and methods to fit the priorities, needs and capacities within the cultural context of communities and universities. Engagement endeavors to go further than partnership in relationship-building through its emphasis on mutual benefits, knowledge exchange and concern with empowering research participants in the research process. Recognizing that "power is embedded in all social relationships, individuals' actions, no matter how well-intentioned, both reflect and alter the power relations among partnership members" (Prins, 2006, p. 3). Engagement attempts to address power imbalances between the university and community.

It does so through the "respectful recognition of the goals, expectations, wisdom and knowledge we all bring to the table to address any particular issues … community members are positioned as 'knowers' and experts, and academics act as learners and listeners," (Holland & Ramaley, 2008, p. 34). Engagement processes, therefore, are concerned with conducting research that contains an action-oriented and transformative agenda for change and/or reform of some aspect of the issue, area, system or institution that is under investigation. They consciously and explicitly devote attention toward altering institutional arrangements when appropriate. Developing this capacity for reciprocal joint relationships expands all participants' learning and knowledge-building in ways that have broad applicability across academic and community settings.

Engaged research on the Social Economy also challenges disciplinary boundaries within the university. Within the academy, this kind of research brings together different research approaches across faculties and disciplines that do not customarily work closely together (for example, the Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law). This can be very productive – and usually is – but there is a need to understand the nature of participatory action research and

community-based research, approaches that are unfamiliar to some academic researchers. Academic researchers who are not accustomed to this type of research may find it challenging, even frustrating, to deal with the length of time needed to reach consensus on the purpose and methodologies of a project. At the same time, participatory approaches can also frustrate those Social Economy organizations that wish to employ research to meet specific and limited objectives, and do not want to tie themselves to ongoing research programmes.

The engaged institution is "committed to direct interaction with external constituencies and communities through the mutually beneficial exchange, exploration and application of knowledge expertise and information" (Holland, 2001, p. 7). These interactions enrich and expand learning and research enquiry within the academic institution, while also enhancing community capacity. They create "better" knowledge in the sense that understandings are fuller or more complete, and they are more widely shared. The "work of the engaged institution is responsive to community-identified needs, opportunities and goals in ways that are appropriate to the universities' mission and academic strengths. The interaction also builds greater public understanding of the role of the university as a knowledge asset and a resource" (Holland, 2001, p. 7). This mutually beneficial interaction helps to build legacy in research that goes beyond the knowledge created. In improving the capacity of a community to provide better services to its members and by preparing students, youth and "new" researchers to be engaged in community-based research and become active citizens in their communities, engagement helps build a lasting legacy.

Categories, Keywords and Questions for Understanding Engaged Research Partnerships

In this section we present a series of categories, keywords and questions that operationalize the concept of "engaged research" discussed above. Based on the assertion that engagement and partnership are not one and the same, and that rhetoric alone is not enough to demonstrate genuine and authentic partnership and engagement in research, we have developed a list of conceptual categories, keywords and questions to help understand the engagement fostered in partnership research. The categories of analysis are (see Table 1.2 for detailed coding scheme):

1. Governance (e.g., who decides which research projects?)
2. Networking (e.g., are they building on and/or building new networks?)
3. Definition of the sector (e.g., was the sector pre-defined?)
4. Content of research (e.g., what topics, how do new topics get included?)
5. Process (methods) of research (e.g., participatory content of actual research?)

6. Capacity-building (e.g., university capacity to reach out, student and community training)
7. Evaluation (e.g., who evaluates, when, to what effect?)
8. Knowledge mobilization (e.g., what dissemination formats are employed?)

In what follows, we briefly discuss each category in turn, highlighting when examples of these dimensions of engaged partnership research may be found in chapters in this volume.

Governance

The governance category asks us to consider who decides which research projects go forward within a research partnership; are both academics and practitioners involved in decision-making, and do their decisions hold equal weight, or is there a clear lead? We have focused on the structural dimensions of governance: a key indicator is the extent and basis of decentralization within the governing and decision-making structures of each of the CSERPs projects. The CSERPs were all large, complicated projects involving multiple advisory boards, committees and research teams. Such large structures take a great deal of time and money to manage and coordinate; there is a fine balance to be achieved between devoting resources to process and co-ordination and implementation of research. Chapter 10, written by the coordinators of the Hub and the Nodes, emphasizes the difficult and important juggling act that each of these incumbents faced. One factor that aided the CSERPs is that there was no turnover of coordinators during the life of the partnerships; this provided a measure of stability and continuity.

Decentralization may occur through thematic and/or regional governance structures, or through horizontal forms of management and decision-making. Chapters 3, 6 and 7 by participants in the Atlantic and Northern Ontario / Manitoba / Saskatchewan (NOMS) Nodes illustrate governance structures that are regionally and thematically decentralized. The Atlantic Node's decentralized governance structure, for example, allowed the project to "evolve" over time through welcoming and linking new community and research partners. Resources were also applied to translate day-to-day administrative documents of the partnership to help ensure accountability.

Chapters 5 and 9 illustrate more centralized governance structures in which a central body may review project proposals, work-plans and outputs, and allocate resources accordingly. A key consideration in the more centralized partnerships is the nature of organizational partners; this model seems to work best when the partnership comprises representative structures with strong capacity and clear mandates. Conversely, the governance structure of the BC-Alberta Node (BALTA) was thematically, but not regionally, decentralized (Chapter 8). A high priority was

placed on moving governing control out of the hands of academia, with the belief that the resulting governance structure would help facilitate engagement and build partnerships between universities and communities involved in the research. One challenge with thematic decentralization was ensuring a balance in the participation of academics and practitioners in different themes; Rural Revitalization and Development attracted more academics, Analysis, Evaluation and Infrastructure Development attracted more practitioners, requiring attention to re-balancing.

A final point of contrast is provided by the Québec Node, organized so as to create a close relationship between the research and practice environments. There were eight regional networks whose co-directors represent someone from academia and an "acteur" or practitioner from the community (see ARUC/RPRQ, 2008b; Chapter 4). Resources are mobilized from both academia and practitioner organizations reflecting a model of "coresponsabilité."

Networking

Networking involves developing and using relationships, acquaintances and contacts made in any number of different settings for (often unforeseen) purposes beyond the reason for the initial contact. Many of the CSERP projects "built on" previously existing networks; and most CSERPs consciously established networks intended to enhance their research capacity. However, engaged research implies that network-building is more than an enabler of research. It is also a valid undertaking in its own right, and could be considered to be a goal ("deliverable") of the project itself.

Chapter 8 shows that the BALTA projects identified networking as a core value and an equally important element of the project to that of research production itself; as such, the goal was to build (create) a network rather than "building on" a previously existing one. Similarly, with respect to the Atlantic Node (Chapter 3) and Northern Node (Chapter 9), their aim was also to build new research networks where none existed before.

In contrast, the NOMS Node built upon previously existing research networks in forming their Node, although as noted by Findlay, Ray and Basualdo (see Chapter 7), new relationships and partnerships outside of Saskatoon and southern Saskatchewan had to be created for some research projects. Long-standing personal relationships, often overlapping, multi-layered and deeply personal, are also central to the action research projects that Broad describes in Chapter 6. Academics do bring research resources that would not otherwise be available to communities, but her argument is that these resources are rendered more effective through the web of relationships that surround them.

The Southern Ontario Node built on existing research relationships, and contributed to the creation of two new organizations. The Association for

Nonprofit and Social Economy Research is an academic organization with a high level of involvement by non-academic participants, while the Ontario Social Economy Roundtable represents a new alliance of co-operatives and non-profits (see Chapter 5). The foundation for the Québec Node's networks and involvement of practitioner organizations was also based on a previous CURA.

Definition of the Sector

Research is, amongst other things, an act of definition with political consequences; in this sense, self- or mutual- definition may be an important pre-condition for practitioner-academic engagement. It is thus important to ask: To what extent is a definition of the sector (or domain) pre-determined in a research partnership prior to undertaking any research? Was exploring definitions of the Social Economy considered a valid area of research and inquiry in itself?

The CSERPs studied the Social Economy, a sector that is often ill-defined and subject to various competing and potentially incompatible definitions. The initial call for proposals issued by SSHRC in 2005 recognized this definitional diversity, referencing a paper by Benoît Lévesque and Marguerite Mendell titled "The Social Economy: Diverse Approaches and Practices." However, one of the axes along which definitions of what constitute the Social Economy differ is regional; this is a consequence of the different socio-economic and political-policy contexts across Canada. A challenge for the CSERPs, and indeed for this reflection on research practice, has been how to compare research partnerships that may not share the same understanding of what is being studied, and hence may be employing different methods and engaging different partners in the process.

Throughout the world there are vigorous debates about the meaning of the term "Social Economy." There is general agreement that it includes the following main organizational types – co-operatives, mutuals, non-profits, charities and voluntary associations. This is the definition that is widely applied and frequently used as a basis for legislation. There is general agreement within the Partnerships that this understanding can apply in Canada. However, debates do continue, and a series of research activities in the Nodes explored the nature and relationships of organizations of these types.

Definitions are important in the real world of regulation, government support and education, but the demand for definitional purity can be unevenly applied to limit access to resources and opportunities. In his chapter reflecting on the achievements and challenges that faced the Hub, Ian MacPherson notes that matters of definition often matter more to academic administrators and governments than they do to direct participants in the Social Economy (Chapter 2).

The Québec Node used a broad definition of the Social Economy based on previous works by academics and practitioners; this suggests that definitional matters were already (largely?) settled in the well-established research relationships underpinning this partnership. In contrast, the Hub (Chapter 2) gave particular prominence and recognition to the diverse definitions of the Social Economy, and was also open to the possibility of conducting research activities around definitional issues. Likewise, the Southern Ontario Node (Chapter 5) conducted further conceptual work on definitional matters. The Atlantic Node paid particular attention to the use of language, encouraging the use of the "Social Economy" as a framing concept in the region as one of four partnership goals (Chapter 3).

Content of Research

The area of "content of research" pertains to the topics examined within the research projects and the process for how new topics get included (if they do). Are topics, key themes and areas of research focus, explicitly shaped by community research interests or do they pay special attention to marginal groups? At what stage in the project was specific research content established (i.e., in the proposal or ongoing over the course of the research)? Were there opportunities to revisit and redefine research content as the project itself progressed and as the partnership developed?

These are difficult questions in today's research funding environment. While all research undertakings should be open to surprise discoveries and new avenues of inquiry, such openness seems especially important in the case of engaged partnership research. The challenge, however, for funding organizations, and arguably, for too many career academics, is that they seek tractable projects with a low risk of non-delivery.

The Atlantic Node (Chapter 3) developed criteria for adding new members, and as the partnership expanded, new themes, projects and activities were added. Other nodes also refined their research questions, with the mid-term review providing an important moment for reflection and redirection. However, openness in agenda-setting has its downsides. The BALTA partnership, for example, devoted its first years to building relationships. Many of these relationships have taken on a life of their own that will survive beyond the end of the CSERPs, yet in the mid-term review, concerns were raised about the published output of the research partnership (Chapter 8).

Research Process

We use the term "research process" to describe the methods and methodologies employed for carrying out the different research projects. Of particular interest is the question of whether, and to what degree, there is

evidence of participatory methods and content within the actual research (i.e., rhetoric versus action). Also important in a consideration of process are issues around: research ethics and their impact on various partners within the research, who is leading the different research projects, and whether there is evidence of attempts to make the research process accessible to community partners (i.e., during proposal development, hiring of researchers and students, ethics approval, and project implementation).

The funding context plays a crucial role here since this will determine who can be involved in particular research activities (see Stoecker, 2008). SSHRC grants customarily expect researchers within the academy to undertake research activities as part of their academic workloads (with the exception of time release stipends, generally not a significant factor within the CSERP). Practitioner researchers, on the other hand, need to have incomes while they undertake research, funding that is rarely possible from their organizations. This creates an imbalance in research that needs to be considered in future similar projects.

The coordinators also highlight a limitation of SSHRC funding regulations on active research participation by paid project employees (see Chapter 10). They recommend that in order to play their coordinating role more effectively, and indeed to recruit suitable candidates, the research contribution of coordinators should be acknowledged and accepted.

The more decentralized (Atlantic, NOMS) and community-led (BALTA) CSERP partnerships appear to have put more emphasis on participatory action research methodologies. At the same time, these Nodes also note the frustrations experienced by community groups with university ethics processes and administrative procedures and the importance of efforts to address these issues. In contrast, partnerships such as the Southern Ontario Node and the National Hub, which were built around representative organizations, appear to have been more concerned with dissemination methods that reached a wider, often policy-oriented, audience than with direct engagement of partners in the research process itself. However, the Southern Ontario Node also showed the value of matching research expertise of academics to the changing needs of community organizations. This was important for both community based and umbrella organizations, especially when some of these lost funding after the change in government in 2006 (Chapter 5).

Capacity-Building

The category of capacity-building focuses on three dimensions. First, the capacity of university partners to reach out to students and communities (i.e., mechanisms and resources to support, employ and/or engage practitioners and community members in the research). Second, whether capacity building (both within the university and community) is explicitly included in the research

proposal and activities. And third, we are also interested in issues around the potential for capacity-building activities to alter or transform institutional structures and rules through the research; for example, to allow the hiring of young people from communities and recognizing them as researchers.

Explicit attention to capacity-building can be found in the NOMS and Atlantic Nodes' decentralized models, which included resources to enhance capacity of community partners to participate within the project and commitment to attempts to alter institutional structures within the university. Chapter 7 describes one research project which was initiated by the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association responding to the Node's call for proposals. Young people were trained and employed through this project to record and relate the experiences of elders, so together they built a new co-operative for trappers. These efforts to reach out through capacity building recognized the community members as "legitimate" researchers within the project. Student training – both in a formal academic sense and in other ways – are another important dimension of capacity-building.

It is also important to recognize that capacity building does not come only from the process of research, but also from the outputs. The Southern Ontario node in particular focused on developing a series of specific measurement tools for community organizations (Chapter 5), while all across the CSERPs, mapping and impact studies provided widely understood quantitative indicators that were invaluable in communicating the contribution of the sector to the public and to decision-makers.

Evaluation

This category explores questions surrounding who evaluates the research project, when, and to what effect. Is there evidence of self-reflection within the project, so that evaluation outcomes might lead to changes in direction of the research? Importantly, is reflection about the nature of the partnership and engagement within the project included as part of evaluation activities? The notion of ongoing learning is a significant concept pertaining to evaluation.

As a category required by SSHRC in both proposals and mid-term reviews, evaluation activities were noted as centrally important by most CSERP projects. Several partnerships noted changes in their activity based on these interim evaluations. The BALTA Node in particular was willing to engage in self-reflection/evaluation within the research project and to evaluate outcomes with an eye to the possibility that this reflection can lead to changes in the direction of and methods utilized to conduct the research. The evaluation process was designed as integral to the program of relationship-building and research (see Chapter 8, Table 8.1).

Research informs social change processes in a variety of ways, but research should not be conflated with change itself. In their contribution to this book, Bussières and Fontan from the Quebec Node present a framework for evaluating community-university research partnerships (Chapter 4) which recognizes the distinction between the evaluation of research partnerships themselves, and of the social change processes in which they take place. Their framework emphasizes how mapping the needs and perspectives of community partners can result in a simple tool that allows for a graphical depiction of an assessment of the research phases. This can serve as a basis for discussion and reflection.

Knowledge Mobilization

The final category, knowledge mobilization, explores the various methods, means, formats and resources put aside for dissemination activities. This includes both research dissemination (i.e., results, findings) and promotion of the Social Economy as a concept and a sector. As a category of analysis it considers whether project partners have made a conscious effort to include diverse partners and audiences in dissemination activities. Is there any evidence of cross-over dissemination (i.e., academics publishing for practitioners and vice versa) and are there mechanisms for reporting, reviewing and discussing findings with practitioners? What attention has been given to reviewing, studying and advocating policies and to curriculum and training development?

One example of engagement around knowledge mobilization comes from the "ground-truthing" practice developed by the Québec Node. Here, researchers meet with practitioners to discuss findings in a workshop format. This Node has also published a *Guide for Knowledge Mobilization in the Context of Research Partnerships* (ARUC/RQRP, 2008a). Because of the research licensing system in many northern communities, the Northern Node demonstrated commitment to knowledge mobilization activities, going so far as to require evidence of report-backs and discussion of research plans with communities in order to receive funding (Chapter 9). As a final example, Broad (Chapter 6) describes how engagement in research lead academics to make fundamental changes in their university course curriculum.

Reflection and Discussion

This eBook proceeds from the perspective that the CSERPs provided a unique and important opportunity for reflecting upon and learning about how to build better research partnerships that achieve active university-practitioner engagement. The eight categories, keywords and questions presented above were developed to help clarify what is distinctive about engaged research. Partnership and engagement in research are not the same thing, and failure to recognize this distinction potentially results in mismatched expectations. Partnership may be

no more than agreements on goals followed by functional specialization, while engagement implies participation in research decision-making that extends beyond the collection and analysis of data.

The chapters that follow show that engagement did indeed happen within the CURA research format, and it is encouraging that SSHRC's recent programming changes have been informed by the CSERP experience, as well as that of other CURAs. Innovative practices can be seen in all the categories of understanding presented here, confirming for us the value of reflecting on this remarkable pan-Canadian experiment in research partnership and engagement. At the same time, it is also clear that engagement beyond partnership is frustrated by the institutional context of the partners. Beyond the well-known factors, such as the funding and capacity constraints facing community-based practitioners, the rigidity of disciplinary and institutional norms in the university, and the restrictions placed by funding agencies on the use of funding, we conclude by highlighting two particular considerations in moving beyond partnership to engagement.

First, some CSERP partnerships may have been locked into their initial project proposals in a way that precluded ongoing learning and development that is essential for full engagement. The SSHRC application and award process understandably gives weight and legitimacy to the initial research proposal, but we might ask what else can be done to create space for deepening engagement? In large, complex and resource-intensive undertakings, the traditional model of waiting to see the outcomes of the research before casting judgment seems especially inappropriate. The SSHRC mid-term review and requirements for evaluation were important mechanisms to deal with this challenge, but more attention might be given to follow-through. The mid-term review could, for example, be extended to include responses to the initial proposal reviewers, as well as the comments of the adjudication committee. Related to this, although there is also a case to be made for fresh perspectives, apparently there was not enough continuity between the initial and reviewing panels. In fairness to the research funder, the Letter of Intent mechanism, and especially the new SSHRC Partnership Development Grants, go far in addressing this concern.

Second, we find it significant to what extent the type of engagement achieved by the various partnerships was shaped by the nature of the regions to which they were matched. Two of the multi-province partnerships had decentralized governance structures; this structural device appears to have assisted the NOMS and Atlantic Nodes in achieving deep local engagement. The Québec Node, created in a distinct policy context and built on a long history of university-community partnership, also employed a regionalized structure to deepen engagement. For the Southern Ontario Node engagement was through a partnership amongst representative organizations, appropriate in a metropolitan

context. The Northern Node also displayed features of a more centralized partnership, with engagement achieved through the involvement of various territorial organizations and representatives. The one community-led partnership, BALTA, strove to exert a transformative influence on its university partners. These different experiences suggest that the design of the CSERPs mattered; initial structuring decisions, and even the nature of the existing partnerships on which research projects were built, exerted considerable influence on the nature of engagement that followed.

In the remainder of this volume, participants in the CSERPs reflect on their efforts to create engaged research partnerships to support and build the Social Economy in all its manifestations. We are delighted that the authors represented here include academics, practitioner-researchers, community members, students and research coordinators. They share details about the challenges they faced and overcame, about their achievements in generating research outputs that range from the traditional and the tangible to the unconventional and tacit, and about tasks as yet unfinished. We thank them for their openness, and for all their works.

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TABLE 1.1: Funded Social Economy CURAs

	Project Title	Home Organization	Partner Organizations	Leads
National Hub	Canadian Social Economy: Understandings and potential	University of Victoria	CCEDNet	MacPherson, Ian & Downing, Rupert
Regional Nodes				
Atlantic	The Social Economy and sustainability: Innovations in bridging, bonding, and capacity building	Mount Saint Vincent University	Community Services Council - Newfoundland & Labrador	Brown, Leslie
Québec	Réseau québécois de la recherche partenariale en économie sociale	Université du Québec à Montréal	Le Chantier de l'économie sociale	Fontan, Jean-Marc
Southern Ontario	A community-university research alliance for Southern Ontario's Social Economy	University of Toronto	Imagine Canada, Ontario Co-op Association	Quarter, Jack
Northern Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan	Linking, learning and leveraging: social enterprises, knowledgeable economies and sustainable communities	University of Saskatchewan, Centre for the Study of Co-operatives	Community University Institute for Social Research, Winnipeg Inner-City Research Alliance, Community Economic & Social Development Department	Hammond Ketilson, Lou
British Columbia and Alberta	The Social Economy in British Columbia and Alberta: Strengthening the foundations for growth	Canadian Centre for Community Renewal	Royal Roads University (administrator), with a collective model for academic leadership	Lewis, Michael
The North	Proposal for a Northern regional Social Economy node	Yukon College	Nunavut Research Institute; Aurora Research Institute; Labrador Institute	Southcott, Chris

TABLE 1.2: Categories, Keywords and Questions for Understanding Engaged Research Partnerships

Categories:	Keyword Indicators (manifest coding):	Question Indicators (latent coding):
Governance	Research partnership Community Lead / Director / Co-director / Steering Committee Budget Structure Decision-making Orientation Operating practices	Who is in the research partnership? Who is the lead? (Academic, community org. etc.) Who makes budgetary decisions? Can/does the governance structure evolve? How? Structure – centralized or decentralized by geography, theme, host? Is there evidence of specific steps to ensure access to decision-making by community and other stakeholders?
Network-building (networking)	Existing networks Previous partnerships Network prior to / will build Core values Assumptions Research capacity Community partners	Does the CURA build on previous partnerships (network, CURA etc.?) Have built network … prior to engaging in research or will build? Distinction between network-building as … core value (i.e., valid in its own right) or to further research capacity?
Definitions (of sector)	"SE defined as …" Core values Assumptions Impact (on partners…)	How is Social Economy definition framed? Is there agreement on a definition? What is the content of agreement? Is definition of SE an area of research itself? Any future partner affected by previously decided upon definition?

Categories:	Keyword Indicators (manifest coding):	Question Indicators (latent coding):
Content (of research)	Motivation Themes Community research interests When research decided Redefining projects Project approval Specific projects (titles etc.) Cluster areas – Sub-nodes	What are the themes? Is content shaped around partnership? When is content decided (How specific is the proposal? How much do mid-term and proposal correspond? Were any new projects approved after the award?) Is there a process for redefining projects? How, by whom? Is there any explicit consideration of minorities or disadvantaged populations?
Process and Methods of Research	Mapping Conceptualizing Methodology Participatory action research Action-oriented research Self-design Ethics Leads Student hiring	What attention is given to mapping of nodes? How and by whom? What attention is given to research ethics? Is there evidence of participatory methods? In the proposal and carried forward to mid-term? Who are project leads? Is there evidence of conscious steps to make research processes accessible to community partner? In matters such as: proposal development student hiring ethics approval project implementation
Capacity-building	Student research assistants Employment – students Employment – community Practitioners "Capacity-building" University / institutional capacity Resources / support / allocation Potential outcome	Are there identified mechanisms to draw students from all levels and backgrounds? Bringing in youth working in community etc.? Do projects explicitly reference capacity-building? What mechanisms and resources exist to support, employ or engage practitioners and community partners? Is university capacity for engagement addressed and changed in any way?

Categories:	Keyword Indicators (manifest coding):	Question Indicators (latent coding):
Evaluation	Participants Community partners Reflection Social Auditing Stakeholders Indicators Self-evaluation Research shift Partnerships	Do they evaluate? What themes / topics are evaluated? Is there evidence that evaluation will lead to reflection / changing direction? Who leads, who participates in the evaluation? Is there any evidence of evaluation having an impact on research? Is there explicit reflection on engagement and the partnership itself?
Knowledge Mobilization	Applied material (Deliverables) Dissemination Publications Policy "Policy" Advocacy Curriculum Training Targets	Is there evidence for conscious inclusion of diverse partners and audiences in dissemination? Is there evidence of cross-over dissemination of knowledge? (i.e., where academics publish for practitioners and vice versa?) Are there mechanisms of ground-truthing findings with practitioners? What attention is given to reviewing / studying / advocating policies? What attention is given to curriculum / training?

CHAPTER 2

Why Staying the Course is Important: Reflecting on the Community-University Relationships Associated with the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships, 2005-2011

Ian MacPherson, Principal Investigator, Co-Director - The National Hub, The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships and Professor Emeritus of History, University of Victoria

and

Mike Toye, Co-Director - The National Hub, The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships and Executive Director, The Canadian Community Economic Development Network

Canada is a vast land divided in many ways: regions, provinces, nations and communities; North, South, East, West and Central; First Nations, French, British, Ukrainian, Chinese, Filipino. Forty years ago, one of the country's most prominent Canadian historians described the nation as a country made up of "limited identities."[1] Ten years later, one of its most important politicians characterized Canada as "a community of communities."[2] Both observations still apply. Both help to explain the perennial Canadian search for a national identity. Both help to explain why Canada is recognized internationally as a country based on values rather than ideological absolutes; over-all, a good country in which to live, in large part because of its capacity for tolerance, its acceptance of diversity, and its essential pragmatism. Differences have enriched it beyond measure.

Divisions, subtleties and ambiguities similarly characterize the Social Economy (SE), a concept that in a formal sense is just a little older than Canada itself.[3] The Social Economy flourishes within nations and across them. It is central to the experiences of ethnic communities, where it can take many forms derived from their respective inheritances. It is a rich source for the development of social services, for stimulating economic growth, and for perpetuating cultural identities. It can help span differences that separate religious groups, divide ideological and philosophical camps, create tensions across class lines, and disrupt rural/urban relationships. It functions within numerous circumstances and conditions around the world, a quality of potentially great significance at a time when many of the world's current "troubled spots" emerged out of breakdowns in the social fabric of communities.

The Social Economy is never static. It is not easy to define in absolute terms or as precisely as some literal-minded observers might like. It is constantly mutating because its essence is to respond to the consequences and possibilities of social and economic change. For the most part, it evolves practically and largely "on the ground," built by people in communities, people responding to variable needs through institutions and practices they understand and that are appropriate to their circumstances and capable of meeting their needs. The Social Economy ultimately is not the consequence of policy directives, though it depends significantly upon appropriate government policies. Contrary to the opinions of some, it is not the creature of any particular ideological system, though in any given country it might be more strongly supported by one political movement than another, but even in that respect, one should not rush to predict.

The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP), which has operated for nearly six years, has been examining the ways in which one complex entity, Canada, can engage another, the Social Economy. This is not as romantic or impossible an effort in partnership negotiation or in windmill tilting, as some might assume. Nor is it a waltz in the dark. The Social Economy is not an unreliable or unknown partner, its character and identity clouded in mystery. Social Economy organisations and movements exist in all societies and, in effect, have done so for centuries, though the name has been used only over the last 160 years. Arguably, for example, what we think of as Social Economy approaches have been used in Canada since the days of New France. The conceptualisation may be relatively new but what it seeks to identify and emphasize is old, if sadly fragmented – that discord being one of the main reasons for undertaking SE analysis.

As understood internationally today, the core of the Social Economy is clear. Institutionally, it consists of community-based organisations with established systems of accountability provided through the organisational structures they inhabit: for the most part, mutuals, voluntary associations, co-operatives, non-profits, and charities – organisations that are required by law to demonstrate (in many instances, through open, elected, publically accountable democratic process) the integrity, minimal costs, and reliability of what they do. As value-based organisations, they aspire to be transparent, democratic, autonomously managed, and service oriented institutions. They distribute such profits or surpluses as they earn on the basis of involvement, not financial investment. They are charged with serving their communities, not as a "nice" thing to do or as a fleeting marketing strategy, but as a main reason for their being.[4] Inevitably, this basis in values creates discussions over aims and methods and often leads to deliberation and dispute, but in the final analysis those discussions are the chief source of its strength. They mean that social issues are not lost before the apparent dictates of what some interpret as economic realities.

Despite the internal consistency that flows from institutional structures and the centrality of considerations of values, some people persist in being seemingly mystified by the idea of the Social Economy. They do so despite the fact that, in other ways, the Social Economy's diversity and ongoing issues are not entirely unlike what one can readily see when considering capitalist forms of enterprise or government agencies that provide services – though the structures and issues are, of course, different. Like the other two general forms of enterprise, the Social Economy has a core of identity but, also like them, its stretches over many kinds of activities structured in several different ways. The Social Economy should not be required to provide a simplistic and completely inclusive definition any more than capitalist firms and government forms of enterprise should be.

After all, how deep is the commonality of interest and form among "mom and pop" shops, gas chains, and multi-national conglomerates? Between newsstands and airlines? How does one simply explain derivatives, business tax codes, interlocking directorships, trade alliances, and the functioning of commodity markets? And, as for government organisations, what is it that would put the Department of National Defence, crown corporations, marketing fish, a lottery corporation, and health clinics into the same category? What are the common values under which they operate? How do they respond to varying stakeholder interests? How do those responses help shape their activities? Do they?

Given that diversity and complexity are typical of all three forms of enterprise, it is reasonable that many universities around the world have created large and growing faculties devoted to the study of business, its complexities, diversities, and uncertainties. It is appropriate that some post-secondary institutions have created significant schools to explore the various themes and issues posed by public enterprise; perhaps more of them should do so. What is surprising, one might even say unacceptable, is that so few have devoted significant resources to the sustained and thorough understanding and development of the Social Economy. One of CSERP's purposes has been to consider how this imbalance might be effectively addressed in Canada at least. In the process, those involved have had to consider in many and diverse ways the relationships among universities, the Social Economy sector, and governments.

Not only was CSERP particularly concerned with the Canadian experience, it has also been constructed in a particularly Canadian way. In organizing the research programme for CSERP, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council tried to accommodate regional differences by creating six regional nodes (North, Atlantic, Québec, Southern Ontario, Northern Ontario / Manitoba / Saskatchewan and British Columbia / Alberta). These regional nodes were charged with undertaking the bulk of CSERP's research. They included both academic and practitioner partners (organisations and individuals). They invariably reflected varying, regionally based levels of familiarity with the

concept of the Social Economy, diverse experiences with its institutional forms, and (above all) different local traditions of community activation, the essential characteristic of the Social Economy. They were and are creatures of their own locations. They do not readily conform to any universal "covering" laws, the conceptual framework so much preferred in western intellectual traditions.

In addition, SSHRC provided for the formation of a national Hub. It was charged with creating as much cohesion as possible under the circumstances (the common predicament facing most Canadian national initiatives). It was made up of the directors of the regional nodes and representatives from a number of national Social Economy organisations (such as: the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, the Canadian Co-operative Association, Imagine Canada, and Women's CED Council).

This paper, written from an academic perspective, is derived from involvement in the national "Hub," from those who "did what they could." It is concerned with some of the successes, issues, and limitations of the university/community relationships that emerged at both the regional and national levels. It ends with some observations on how the initiatives that were started by CSERP might be extended.

Some Successes

CSERP has demonstrated the value of thinking about the Social Economy as a distinct sector. This was by no means a foregone conclusion, and, even now, many may not have grasped the full possibilities. The idea of thinking about the varieties of organisations involved in the Social Economy as a group – mutuals, voluntary associations, co-operatives, non-profits, and charities – has not been commonly undertaken in Canada outside of some circles in Québec. It was not so much that there was a learning curve for everyone involved, as there were several learning curves within the regions and within provinces, and frequently within communities. People starting from different places follow different paths.

The specific research and community activation projects will be reviewed and summarized in some depth within the reports of the regional nodes now being prepared or that will be prepared by early 2012. By the autumn of 2011, too, the Canadian Community Economic Development Network will have prepared a meta-analysis on behalf of the National Hub.

The important point is that the project has demonstrated the value in thinking about the Social Economy as a sector, in examining the commonalities and differences across the various kinds of institutions and community activism that it includes. Specifically, work within CSERP has demonstrated that it is valuable to consider such issues as the following from a SE viewpoint:

- the issues Social Economy initiatives tend to encounter as they begin (the challenges of their formative and stabilizing periods)
- what they require in order to become stable and ongoing
- how they relate to communities in the beginning and subsequently
- how they are financed – as they are started and as they progress
- how their nonfinancial contributions can be measured
- how they can maximize self-funding activities
- how they deal with the general and the unique managerial/governance issues they confront
- the kinds of government policies – at the municipal, provincial and nation levels – that are necessary for their sound development
- how they differ in structure and associations in the various parts of Canada
- how the different kinds of SE organisations differ in structure and capabilities.

Secondly, the project has repeatedly demonstrated the value of collaboration between universities and communities. In total, over 300 researchers from universities/colleges and from Social Economy organisations were involved (a little over 65% of them came from the academy). Almost all of them were engaged through the various activities of the regional nodes. The separation between the two kinds of researchers – those within the academy and those within the Social Economy – was not as complete or as sharp as some might expect. Many academics interested in the Social Economy also walk the directions they point to in their talk, serving on Social Economy boards, mobilizing various community-based initiatives, and advising governments on at least part of the policy framework that affects the sector's development. Many people, especially younger ones, within the sector were already engaged (or became engaged) in university studies concerned with the Social Economy, mostly at the graduate level. There was more exchange between the two groupings of researchers than was commonly realized and it expanded significantly during the life of the project; the boundaries were already porous and became more so.

Though some projects were carried out exclusively by university or SE researchers, most of them were based on university/community collaboration: for example, in studies concerned with food security, health, housing, rural/remote communities, First Nations, and immigration issues. On the academic side, the work of CSERP was notable for engaging researchers from sixteen universities and over twenty disciplines. Their work – and that undertaken by Social Economy organisations – cumulatively contributed markedly to the development

of a new and thriving research organisation, the Association for Non-Profit and Social Economy Research, and it helped strengthen the previously organized Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation. It contributed to the formation of strong new research programmes in the field, most obviously at Mount Saint Vincent, Toronto, and York universities and at Yukon College. It helped strengthen existing programmes at universities in Saskatoon and Victoria. It strengthened the research capacity of several SE organisations, most obviously CCEDNet and the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal in Port Alberni, British Columbia.

These successful experiences also have encouraged Social Economy organisations to pursue research activities involving both academics and their own researchers, the Canadian Co-operative Association's successful application for a CURA grant being one of the most important examples. It has led SSHRC and several universities to reconsider their policies regarding community-based research. It has assisted in (or stimulated) the development of many websites that reflect the research that has been accumulated. In time, one hopes, it will encourage the development of a multi-institutional website devoted to the totality of the Social Economy and/or its constituent organisational types.

These kinds of deepened and continuing alliances between universities and SE organisations may well be CSERP's most important legacy. This is quite appropriate, one might suggest, because it is a form of particularly rich social capital.

Third, the work of CSERP involved scores of young researchers, many of them employed on specific projects related to their own special interests. Most of them participated in special youth-organized and structured events, usually held in conjunction with the annual Congress of the Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences or in workshops/conferences sponsored by the nodes and/or the national Hub. Many of those connections are continuing and they bode well for future research in the field. The students readily saw the value and need for transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries in pursuing Social Economy studies. They generally moved easily between academic and community environments, perhaps more easily for them than for some older academic researchers and Social Economy organisation leaders.

Some Issues

Given Canadian diversity and the degrees of familiarity with the Social Economy across the country, it is inevitable that there are different emphases in how the different regions and nations that make up Canada view its contributions and possibilities. For those who do not take the time to understand the reasons for, and value of these diversities, this situation will be a challenge,

perhaps used as an excuse inhibiting further enquiry and reflection. Disturbing conventional categories is never easy.

The management of funding within existing accounting systems has been complicated. SSHRC criteria for the kinds of organisations it directly supports made it difficult for SE organisations to participate fully in the Council's competitions. They sometimes made it difficult to compensate SE researchers who, unlike academic researchers, cannot undertake substantial research activities unless they (or their organisations) receive some special designated compensation. Moreover, when SE researchers and organisations can be compensated, university accounting procedures are sometimes slow in processing accounts, a reflection of the complexity of most university/college financial management systems as well as the underfunding of support services within many academic institutions. Such slowness creates particularly difficult situations for organisations operating within tight budgets, a common enough circumstance among many SE organisations.

On another level, and despite the collaboration that was achieved, it can be claimed that the work undertaken within CSERP was inhibited somewhat by competition among the various stakeholders. In one sense, of course, this could only be expected. A competitive ethos pervades our society. It is no more in evidence than in universities where the emphasis is strongly on individual accomplishments and collaborative, co-operative approaches are not always fully valued. The market place of ideas, a common concept in the academic world, fosters competitive practices in both research and teaching. Co-operative or group research and teaching are not widely practiced and supported; arguably, they are the most effective and important kind of research that can inform the Social Economy.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that organisations within the SE also exist within highly competitive environments. They frequently compete with each other intensely for funding, usually from governments and foundations. The institutional differences – co-operatives, mutuals, societies, and others – have created strong loyalties to approaches and organisations that are slow to break down and, in fact, should not entirely disappear - there is value in perpetuating the distinct approaches of the different institutional forms. The challenges are to learn how to benefit from what each form accomplishes, to find ways to co-ordinate efforts, as it is desirable, and to ensure that people in communities have full and accurate information on all the SE alternatives.

Moreover, people who assume leadership roles within the sector typically possess strong and assertive personalities. They are often highly motivated by deep commitments to what they do and how they do it. They have their own constituencies of supporters, many of them – either individuals or organisations – unaware of the Social Economy dimensions of what they do, especially in English-

speaking Canada. It is not easy to create common understandings and common causes within the total Social Economy, no easier than it is within the academy.

The SE sector and the academy also tend to have different objectives in mind when they carry out research. Somewhat like the private sector, SE institutions particularly want research that addresses immediate practical issues; even more importantly, they want research results that can assist them in making the case for funding from governments and foundations for the projects they wish to undertake. For them, research is very much a moving agenda: the phrases and modes of analysis that are "in" are what really matter. Unfortunately, the "Social Economy" is, to this point, rarely "in."

On the other hand, academic researchers, who typically juggle a number of research projects at any given time, are more concerned with situating their work within longer-term research agendas. Their most important "audience" usually is their peers: they typically are very much concerned with conference participation and publication in the most recognized journals in their fields – and not necessarily in the public impact of their work. Moreover, within university administrative systems their engagement with SE organisations is typically considered in the "service" category for purposes of career advancement – as defined by decisions over tenure, merit, and promotion. Unfortunately, that category does not normally carry the same significance as "research" or "teaching," the other main categories for career evaluation at most universities and (increasingly) many colleges.

Not unexpectedly, these different circumstances tend to produce different ways of communicating results. The accustomed styles of the academy and the SE organisations vary considerably. Like most professional groupings, the academic disciplines and sub-disciplines have developed their own vocabularies and modes of thought that work effectively for their own purposes, and as they have evolved, in many instances over long periods. The goal tends to be to contribute to theory as it has been defined, theory that may well contribute to practice – or may not, depending upon how it affects the teaching of professionals active within the SE. The literature that is produced may not be so readily accessible to those who are not of the particular disciplines and sub-disciplines for whom it is particularly prepared. The result can be the production of knowledge without much thought or attention being paid to its readability and implementation.

On the other hand, research produced for and by SE organisations tends to be for immediate and short-term use. It is concerned with practical issues involved in implementing projects or in garnering support from others. It is commonly shared more through workshops, training sessions, panels, and information sessions. It tends to be transitory and rarely is it cumulative within a well-defined theoretical framework.

Another constant issue emanates from the difficulty in raising the idea of the Social Economy within some government circles. English-speaking Canada tends to see the kinds of institutions associated with the Social Economy through the lens of American notions of volunteer organisations. They tend to follow the approach pioneered by The Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project. While this approach has produced many important contributions, particularly in demonstrating the immense value of volunteer, charitable organisations, it has, from the perspective of the Social Economy, undervalued the importance and possibilities of co-operative organisations. While there has been some movement in this respect at The John Hopkins School in recent years, this approach remains essentially in place. That difference particularly affects how the SE can undertake economic activities. Overall, the SE in most countries has turned to co-operatives as institutions of agency, notably in undertaking economic development. Not including them (and admittedly there are questions) as central players of many different sizes and types severely reduces the capacity of the SE to address many contemporary issues. Arguably, too, this undervaluation of the co-operative model is particularly important for the future if the capacity of the state to address social issues continues to be reduced. The SE needs a strong and sympathetic co-operative sector.

It can also be argued that The John Hopkins approach undervalues informal, non-registered efforts by groups of people within civil society. Such activities, admittedly very difficult to quantify and evaluate, are nevertheless very important within the Social Economy. They are the seed bed from which formal organisations of the Social Economy emerged. Understanding them and figuring out how they might be encouraged should be an important part of any Social Economy inquiry – and of dynamic Social Economy development.

Finally, in recent years, many people and organisations involved in the SE have watched (and in some instances encouraged) the development of social entrepreneurship. This form of economic development has the advantage of fitting easily within mainstream economic thought in much of North America: i.e., an entrepreneur perceives an economic opportunity and pursues it; the market ultimately adjusts to meet whatever economic needs become evident. What distinguishes it from other forms of mainstream entrepreneurship, however, is that it is directed at meeting some social purpose. Clearly, this is a welcome way of thinking about economic opportunity: any effort aimed at alleviating the problems of poverty and social dislocation should be welcome.

Social entrepreneurship, however, raises issues about permanence of motivation and public accountability. Some individuals seeking to do something about housing for the poor in the 1920s had become slum landlords by the 1940s. In firms where ownership resides in one person or in which securing profits is the dominating goal (or becomes such), everything depends

upon the goodwill of those with power. One can argue that the community-based enterprises following the accepted institutional structures of the Social Economy – institutions such as societies, co-operatives and mutuals – offer better guarantees of long-term commitments, more secure forms of accountability (though vigilance is always needed to ensure that is honoured). At the very least, SE institutions should be encouraged so they can fulfil the "watchdog" role of providing a check on those who proclaim their altruistic purposes while addressing important social issues through economic action. The question of how to respond to social entrepreneurship is important and more open and intensive thought should be focussed on it within SE circles.

The Key Limitation

From an academic perspective, the main limitation within this kind of work is that faculty and students have to find ways in which they can situate it within the teaching and research activities currently prevailing in the academy. A fully satisfactory study of the SE (and any constituent part of it, such as the study of co-operatives) is in reality a complex interdisciplinary field of enquiry. It requires engagement with ideas and topics normally associated with a broad sweep of the Social Sciences, Business Faculties, Schools of Public Administration, Faculties of Law, Faculties of Education (notably Adult Education), and some departments in the Humanities. Creating such a programme in the fiercely competitive and structurally slow-to-change worlds of the academy is not easy. CSERP can claim to have helped start that process over the last six years. It is a subject that will require much more consideration over the years to come if the SE is to play the roles that it should.

Starting and sustaining such enquiries, though, is not easy in the academy. University and college administrative structures, though loosening in some institutions, remain impenetrable in many. People undertaking research in a new and broad field typically have to develop two careers, one in their "home" discipline, the other in the field that really interests them. Journals, especially in disciplines where hierarchies of journals are important for career advancement, such as Business, are often unaware of, or indifferent to, the Social Economy. Consequently, it can be a challenge for people deeply committed to SE research to gain the recognition they need in order to build successful careers.

Starting a new field of enquiry is ultimately a matter of gaining secure funding, designated appointments, and growing recognition, as the history of Women's Studies and Environmental Studies within the Canadian academy abundantly shows. It is also a matter of cohesion among its supporters (which is never easy), the development of research agendas (a matter for constant attention), and the strategic pursuit of reasonable objectives (requiring a kind of openness and frankness not easily achieved). CSERP struggled with this kind of

open, systematic effort, but perhaps the main forum in which it was most solidly advanced has been through the deliberations of ANSER and CASC, the two academic societies most closely tied to efforts on behalf of the Social Economy. One can only hope that they will continue those efforts and that the research into the SE will not become segmented into limited projects and concerned only with the most pressing immediate issues for funding and institutional well-being. Trees are not an adequate substitute for a forest.

The challenge of building something substantial is no more important than for the young researchers (within and without the academy) who have been attracted to work within the Social Economy. CSERP – the national Hub and the regional nodes – have all benefitted enormously from the enthusiasm and commitment of scores of new and generally younger researchers. Their interests are important, their perspectives valuable, and their contributions appreciated. They deserve to be supported.

Some Observations on the Future

The work pursued through CSERP, despite the challenges and limitations, has clearly demonstrated the value of undertaking research into the Social Economy. It has shown what the cluster of organisations and initiatives that make it up have done and are doing – and more importantly, what they can do. Six years seems like a long time, but it is not long for the maturing of a complicated and extensive research field. Some of the work, indeed, is being pursued through new projects involving partnering organisations and individuals who became known to each other through the work that CSERP undertook. What remains important though, is that there be ongoing, persistent efforts to grasp the wider possibilities; to see what the SE can be asked to do; and to explore, systematically and cumulatively how it can best do it. There will be a growing need for better over-all conceptualisation, for better and more accessible collections of information, and for cogent arguments for the development of the sector. Otherwise, the work will be spasmodic and of passing interest. The full possibilities of seeing what the Social Economy – and its diverse instruments – can accomplish will not be grasped; it will not become a part of public discourse, a readily assumed alternative for the resolution of social and economic problems, and a way to harness the rich and diverse possibilities of community-based enterprise.

The work of CSERP has also suggested the value of extensive, sustained, layered, and multi-party collaboration among all those inside and outside universities who are interested in the institutions and ways of the Social Economy. Some considerable progress was made in building an inter-connected resource base over the past six years, but more collaboration is possible and should be fostered. The rallying and empowering of communities through

institutions their people control has been an important force in Canadian history (as evidenced by the roles of charities and co-operatives). It can become an even more powerful force, given the communication possibilities we possess and that can be used much more.

We live at a time, perhaps not unlike that when capitalism began to flourish, when there was a dramatic reorientation of the international economies, when the stable, known world that most people had assumed to be the norm, was shaken by economic change, intellectual turmoil, communications revolutions, and social dislocation. The superficial consequences of today's transition can be seen in the growing power of Asian countries. The more significant shifts are in the transformation of communities, the challenging of general understandings, other communication revolutions, and changing relationships with our resources, just as it can be argued that the decline of the feudal order and its worldview, along with the development of printing and agriculture, were the most important markers in the rise of capitalism. Today, as the roles of the state are altered and challenged, as community fabrics are weakened, the power of group action for economic purpose or social betterment becomes more important.

The Social Economy is not the total answer to the pressures and possibilities that confront our times, but it offers strengths and resources that can be most useful – that it would be foolish not to explore seriously. It deserves a chance to thrive, one that is honest and open, unblinkered and fair. It demands the best from those who would engage it, not for personal or institutional reasons, but for the common good – on which ultimately we all depend. Despite the challenges and the complexity of fitting into the world-view of English-speaking North America, it is important that this be done. It is essential to stay the course. It is important that all those involved consider how the idea of the Social Economy can be further examined and applied.

Endnotes

1. J.M.S. Careless. (1969). Limited Identities in Canada. *Canadian Historical Review, 50*(1), pp. 1-10.

2. Joe Clark, 1980 federal election campaign.

3. The term "économie sociale" was first used by Charles Dunoyer in 1830. At about the same time its was the subject of a course of study at the University Louvain. More generally, it should be seen as part of a longer standing debate over the nature of the market, a debate that began in the late eighteenth century and has never stopped.

4. The values accepted by ARIES (the European Centre for the Social Economy) are perhaps the best summary of the underlying commitments of people engaged in the Social Economy. They are:

Open – they are made up of volunteer membership open to those able to use the organisation's services

Democratic – their control systems are based on voting systems in which all are equal and issues are resolved through majority decisions

Autonomously managed – they are independent from the public and the private sector

Service oriented – they are primarily concerned with providing services to their members rather than making profits for their investors

Participation in profits on the basis of involvement – they distribute profits (often called surpluses) to their members or stakeholders in proportion to their contributions or patronage

Concerned about their communities – they make economic and social contributions to the communities in which they reside and they are respectful of their environment

CHAPTER 3

Partners in Research: Reflections on Creating and Sustaining a Collaborative Research Network

Leslie Brown, Mount Saint Vincent University
Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network

In this chapter I reflect on the experiences of the Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network (SESRN) as a community-university research partnership, developed within the framework offered by SSHRC's CURA programme. Reviewing this experience allows me to draw out some of the implications for knowledge about, and capacity for, successful partnered research. SESRN was thus an intentional creation, a community of practice (Wenger, 2006) created by people and organizations entering into new relationships. Highly diverse though the members were (e.g., in institutional affiliation; culture/subculture; nation; degree of inclusion and marginalization in the wider society; language; experience with, and expectations of, research and of activism), they were drawn together by a desire to be part of a research network focusing on the social economy.

A major priority of the first year in particular was to lay the foundations for the kind of community we wanted to build, foundations that would allow us to work effectively as a team, to strengthen our knowledge and capacities, and to meet the research and dissemination goals we honed together. After that, the challenge was to continue as we had begun, to be flexible and open to new opportunities while juggling the myriad expectations we held for our work together, and to meet commitments we made to external parties. This chapter describes our efforts to achieve such an accommodation, offering commentary on the successes and challenges along the way.

As Director of the network my reflections are necessarily grounded in my own experiences and particular locations within the network: based in a university, located in Halifax, player of multiple roles (as network director, as participant in several projects and in a number of governance bodies). I draw, as well, on reports from the many evaluations that were conducted during the course of the CURA. I rely heavily on two reports of team-wide evaluations – one prepared by an academic (Kienapple, 2008) and the other by a community partner (Daughton, 2011).[1] While our experiences are certainly relevant to other CURAs, the qualities of the SESRN were shaped by our particularities - the research focus on the social economy of Atlantic Canada,

the characteristics of SESRN's people and organizations (social economy organizations and activists, community-oriented academics), and the ways the partnership adapted to (and shaped) the SSHRC CURA programme guidelines and expectations.[2] Many of the academic researchers had experience in social economy organizations (often as volunteers), and many of the community partners had experience with research (some in CURAs), so these people brought invaluable experience to the network.

Below I consider partnered research from the perspectives of university researchers, community partners/activists, and SSHRC. Recognizing, respecting and addressing these sometimes divergent views is central to building a successful partnership. I then describe SESRN's approach to: (1) prioritizing shared foundational principles, (2) developing structures and processes to effect participatory methods of governance, (3) prioritizing Participatory Action Research (PAR) approaches to developing and carrying out partnered research projects, and (4) framing and ensuring accountability (which requires the assessment of successes and challenges). The third section of the chapter reviews the results of SESRN's various self-evaluation reports, summarizing experiences and outcomes. The final section offers some concluding observations.

Three Perspectives on Partnered Research: Intersections and Divergences

Table 3.1 poses five questions that every partnership addresses, whether deliberately and as part of planning for engagement, or without explicit dialogue and on an ad hoc basis.[3] Examples of potential answers to these questions are presented in the three right hand columns of the table; answers from the perspectives of: partners based in SE organizations rooted in communities, partners based in the academy, and from SSHRC's perspective. At first glance, Table 3.1 shows considerable agreement: on definitions of partnered research, on who should be included in the partnership, and on the way the partnership should work. However, many complexities and nuances are not immediately apparent, even when starting from the premise that all partners commit to collaborative, respectful and egalitarian partnerships. For SESRN, the differences in meaning, expectations, and approaches to the work had to be addressed and, to the degree possible, reconciled, oft-revisited and again reconciled – an iterative process. Network members needed time to know and build trust with one another, bridging the "categories" of university and community, while meeting obligations to one another, to our home institutions and communities, and to SSHRC. Since they had to do this quickly, it was necessary to bring explicit "negotiated" aspects to bear.

We knew from the literature, and our own experiences, that it is not easy to establish partnerships; nor is it easy to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Indeed, SESRN encountered most of the challenges discussed in the literature (Rosenow-Redhead, n.d.), and a few others besides. For example:

- high probability for misunderstandings, e.g., people will use different terminology, and may misconstrue one another's terms;
- process is slow; e.g., building consensus takes time and everyone involved is likely to be juggling other commitments;
- managing different agendas, and agreeing on main points, e.g., what are our key measures of success?;
- difficulties in achieving a "real sharing of power and resources between academics and practitioners;"
- overcoming constraints from home institutions - many institutions are inherently hierarchal;
- the culture of academia has not typically been conducive to these sorts of partnerships.

Despite these potential pitfalls, participants in SESRN believed that partnering could be personally and professionally satisfying and enriching. We were convinced that partnered research is not only perfectly compatible with high quality research standards, but that in many instances the quality surpasses that of conventional research. From the perspective of dissemination and knowledge mobilization, partnered research can be highly productive, reaching a wider audience, and resulting in valuable and often innovative contributions to knowledge, policy, practice and social change (Gauvin, 2007; Lomas, 1997; Cuthill, 2010). SESRN was able to learn from the literature, from one another, from colleagues in the other SE networks, and from reflection on our own practices. Reviewing the questions posed in Table 3.1, and the likely variations in the perspectives of community, academia, and SSHRC gives us a framework for discussing the various elements of the SESRN story.

Table 3.1: Partnered Research – A Taste of the Complexities

	Community-Based Research (University Researcher Perspective)	**Community Engagement and Research** (Community Perspective)	**Community-University Research Alliance** (SSHRC Perspective)
1. What is partnered research?	"A partnership of students, faculty, and community members who collaboratively engage in research projects for the purpose of solving a problem or creating social change." (Stoecker, 2005)	"Research that strives to be community situated … with a research topic of practical relevance to the community (as opposed to individual scholars) …; collaborative … share control of the research agenda [and] action oriented – the process and results are useful to community members …" (Ochoka et al., 2010).	" … partnerships between community organizations and postsecondary institutions which, through a process of ongoing collaboration and mutual learning, will foster innovative research, training and the creation of new knowledge ..." (SSHRC, 2005)
2. Who is included in the partnership?	- Universities (researchers and students); - Community organizations and their members / leaders who bring legitimacy, grounded expertise, and an interest in using research to address problems / enable positive change	- Community organizations and their members / leaders; - Researchers from outside these organizations who bring legitimacy, skills, and perspectives, that the community can tap to address matters of concern / enable positive change	- Universities (researchers and students); - Organizations from the community - Partners who can bring or leverage additional resources (financial and other)
3. How should the partnership work?	- Collaborative - Mutual learning - Attention to relations of power; respectful relations	- Attention to relations of power; respectful relations - Collaborative - Mutual learning	- Ongoing collaboration and mutual learning - Working together as equal partners in the research

4. What is the purpose of partnering in research - anticipated outcomes?	- Obtain reliable valid data that contributes to knowledge, and (for many) can inform policy analysis and decisions as well as social change - Leverage additional resources (financial, in-kind, grounded expertise) - Capacity building (skills, knowledge) - Building networks of people with similar commitments and concerns (friendships / colleagues) - Career and personal motivations at play to varying degrees for individuals (tenure, promotion, etc)	- Meet the needs of the community organizations for reliable valid data that can be used in many ways including advocacy work - Leverage additional resources (financial, in-kind, expertise) - Capacity building (skills, knowledge, mobilizing) - Building networks of people with similar commitments and concerns (friendships / colleagues) - Career and personal motivations at play to varying degrees for individuals (for self and/or for one's organization)	- Increase research capacity across university and community-based participants in the research - Result in knowledge that is valued and useful for all the partners - Dissemination across multiple audiences - Foster innovative research, training and the creation of new knowledge - Contribute to social / cultural / economic development - Demonstrate the value of the work SSHRC supports
5. To whom is the Alliance accountable? **(note implications for measures of "success")**	- To academic standards of the discipline(s) and academic peers/ departments - To the partners and participants in the research - To ethics review boards - To the funder	- To the organization and its members/ clients - To standards of own fields - To the partners and participants in the research - To ethics review boards - To the funder	- To SSHRC, government, and citizens of Canada - To academic standards - To the partners and participants in the research - To Tri-Council ethics standards

First, a word about context is in order. As Bowen et al. (2008, p.26) remind us, best practice techniques in engaged partnerships are contextually dependent. As a research network funded by SSHRC, SESRN was subject to SSHRC rules. This meant that there were certain "non-negotiable" elements of our work together. Beyond moral and legal accountability for the use of funds, the criteria against which we would be evaluated (e.g., at the mid-term review) were those of the CURA programme. A valuable but challenging feature of this programme

was that partnerships took place on so many levels – within SESRN, with others on the Board of the Hub, and with the wider Canadian Social Economy Research Partnership.

A second contextual factor, related to both Tri-Council requirements and to academic standards, was the requirement for ethics reviews by university-based ethics committees. The universities resisted collaboration on this, and most projects had to gain approval from (and report to) two or more university review committees – a time consuming and frustrating process.

Thirdly, our research, and achievement of successful dissemination and knowledge mobilization, would be judged according to multiple criteria. Academics needed to consider disciplinary peer review standards, while community-partners needed to meet standards of relevancy to their home organization and to action objectives. All wanted reliable and valid data, but did not always agree on how to achieve that. Related to this was the fact that SSHRC, and our own commitments, required that we address multiple audiences.

This was even more complex than it seems since SSHRC expectations, as well as our own, required our network to encompass a significant diversity of social economy organizations and actors, of disciplines and home institutions, of urban, rural and remote locations. Given our regional focus, network members necessarily came from every province. We also included organizations and activists embedded in Francophone, Anglophone, Mi'kmaq, and immigrant communities. This, then, was a fourth contextual factor. We built a network with people and organizations from many differing communities ranging over considerable geographic distances.

Lastly, we knew that SESRN would not live on beyond the term of the grant (at least in this form). We had to get to know one another and learn to work together very quickly in circumstances that required novel relationships. Participation in the network was demanding of time and, for many, was emotionally demanding as well. Putting into practice the principles we developed together and focusing on the objectives we shared, we sought a "negotiated equality" (Cuthill, 2010, p. 31).

Reflection on the answers to the questions in Table 3.1 can help unravel the complexities of the network's efforts. One general comment is that the differences in perspectives are not to be interpreted merely as "problems." These differences sparked considerable discussion and mutual learning, enriching relationships - even where tensions continued to exist. In what follows, I will place the greatest emphasis on questions 2 and 3.

Question 1: What is a Community-University Research Alliance?

Table 3.1 presents three descriptions of partnerships between communities and universities. The perspective of a university-based researcher is represented by Stoecker (2005), a respected and experienced advocate and practitioner of engaged research. The view from the community perspective is represented by the influential non-profit Centre for Community Based Research. The third column presents SSHRC's perspective on CURAs. From this comparison we see that university-based researchers, community partners, and SSHRC describe research alliances in similar ways, while differing in emphasis.

As an example of an area where SSHRC's priorities do not fully square with those of the community partners in the SESRN, consider the focus on training students. Though generous of their time and experience, and while they value mentoring and training, community partners find it strange that students who are mentored within a research project have to leave the team once they graduate. The project loses someone who is contributing a great deal. As well, a great deal of time goes into mentoring students, only to repeat that mentoring again and again over the course of the project. University-based team members see this as part of their job as educators. Not so for community-based partners who often do this mentoring and training, and indeed take part in the research itself, "on the side" rather than as a part of their job.[4]

As a second example, consider the creation and dissemination of "new knowledge." For community partners, the emphasis is often on serving the needs of the partner organizations and their communities, on prioritizing immediacy of knowledge transfer out to communities. For university-based team members and for SSHRC "new knowledge" also means contributing to the development of theory and to empirical knowledge, through academic publication/dissemination. Frequent (civil) communication was needed to build mutual understanding and to ensure that this difference did not jeopardize relations.

Question 2: Who was included in the SESRN Partnership?

This is where it all starts – the composition of the partnership. SESRN recruited and attracted academics (mostly from the region) with histories of partnering with community groups (or who wanted to learn to do so) and individuals from (mainly) grass-roots organizations rooted in local communities who valued the opportunity to partner in research about the SE.[5] While grass-roots organizations tend to be small and often over-stretched, we also knew that such organizations are "typical" of the social economy in the region (Rowe, 2006) and as such needed to be central members of the network. Further, we wanted to reach into local communities as deeply as possible, and to attract activists committed to mobilizing through the SE. Decisions about recruitment

and acceptance of requests to join the network were guided by the goals, general research themes, broad research questions and methodological approaches committed to in our SSHRC proposal. Federations, people from various government departments, people from outside the region and other bodies were included, if not always as partners, then certainly as "Interested Parties" who received team communications and participated in dissemination events.[6]

Question 3: How Should the Partnership Work?

Answers to this question are very similar across the three columns of Table 3.1. Discussing what these qualities meant to the various members of the team helped inform decisions about governance and the research process. Reporting empirical research on the factors that contribute to effective community-university engagement McNall et al. (2008, p. 327) identify effective partnership management and opportunities for the co-creation of knowledge as features that offer the best potential for achieving successful community–university engagement. Kienapple (2010) offers a complementary version of this emphasis on governance and research design, one rooted in the particular nature of social economy organizations in general, and the members of SESRN in particular:

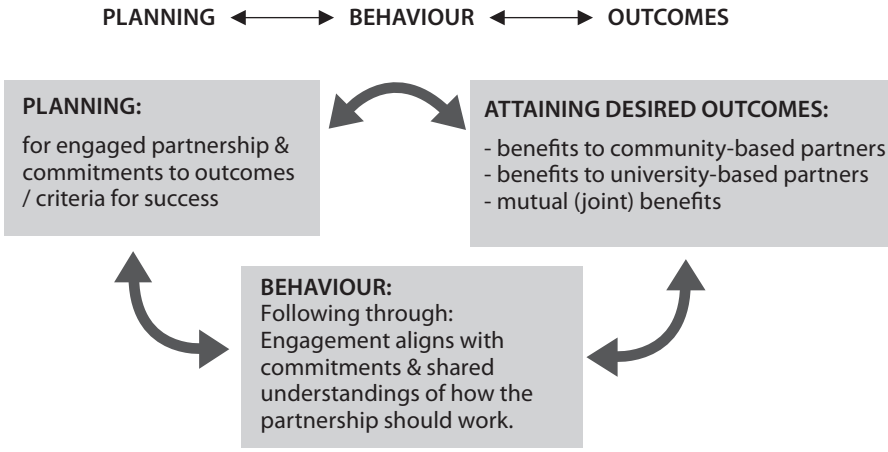
> Social economy organizations are characterized by participation, community responsibility and increased community capacity. Community-University partnerships that have emerged to examine the impact of the social economy organizations have to accommodate to the dual challenge of adapting methodologies to observe the functioning of these participatory organizations and adopting governance policies and practices that mirror the participatory characteristics found within social economy organizations.

In SESRN we found that success in "getting the research and dissemination done" was integrally linked with "following the appropriate processes," "maintaining respectful relationships," and "mutual learning." One community partner told Daughton (2011) "My experience with this work is that it is quite inclusive and respectful. Not only does this approach work, *it is a necessary approach* when dealing with community groups" (emphasis added).

Underpinning both of these is effective communication. Emke (2011) explains that "… a community is a social product, and effective communication is one of its constituent elements." Drawing upon interviews with community partners from various projects, Golden et al. (2011, p. 1) report that communication is "directly or indirectly described as vitally important to successful community and university partnerships." Complementing that is flexibility and openness to changing "in course," as appropriate based on input from the team. Figure 3.1 presents the process of building and sustaining a

collaborative research network as an iterative process, incorporating periods of reflection (within projects and within the team as a whole) and adaptation along the way.

Figure 3.1: Iterative Processes for a Collaborative and Sustainable Research Partnership



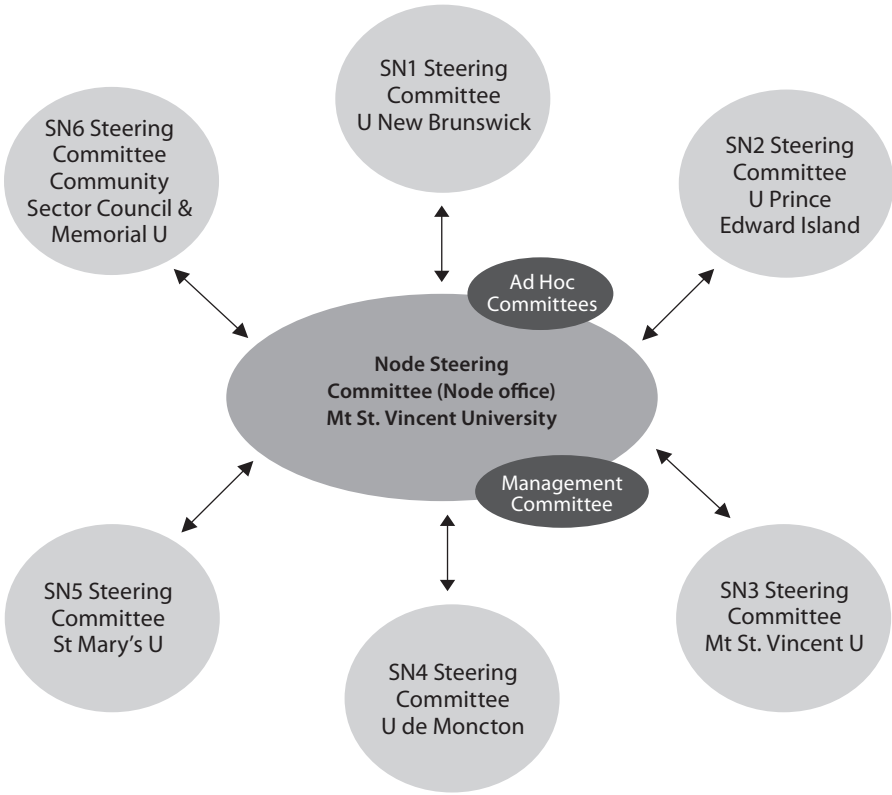
The characteristics of community-university partnerships as presented in Table 3.1 align with those of *transformational* engagement, the most difficult form of partnership to develop and sustain (Bowen, et al., 2008, p. iii).[7] This approach requires ongoing authentic dialogue, shared sense-making and critical reflexivity (Bowen et al., 2008, p. 14).[8] Table 3.2 elaborates on the qualities of transformational engagement. Much more common, and less likely to achieve the full range of outcomes intended by a CURA, are partnerships characterized by *transactional* engagement based on limited relationships with one another (e.g., philanthropy, sending employees to volunteer in the community). *Transitional* forms of engagement are characterized by genuine attempts to move beyond transactional towards transformational engagement, while falling short in one or more key dimension. For example, in striving for effective multi-lateral communication, they may not achieve fully shared understandings or framing of problems. It is likely that partnered research networks are characterized by a range of degrees and forms of engagement.

a) Participatory governance framework for the SESRN partnership

The Steering Committee (SC) and full team re-affirmed and elaborated upon the schematic of the network's decentralized governance structure as laid out in the original SSHRC proposal, at the first two SC meetings in the fall of 2005, in the sub-node (SN) meetings that fall, and at the team meeting in February of 2006. At the team meeting we explored community partner expectations and

hopes for the network and heard presentations from community-based SESRN partners. Team members participated in workshops, shared their experiences with others, lead discussions about involvement in the social economy, identified qualities of effective research partnerships, clarified expectations for communication, and so on. Among the many helpful comments, consistent themes were: genuine collaboration, strong emphasis on communication, and face-to-face meetings in which formal activities (e.g., presentations, discussions, feedback sessions) were balanced with informal networking, bridging and bonding time. Time for fun (usually involving music) was valued too and contributed to our sense of community.

Figure 3.2: Governance Diagram



This is a modified version of the Atlantic Node governance diagram on the SESRN website at http://www.msvu.ca socialeconomyatlantic/pdfs/Governance/Governance%20diagram%20E.pdf

The basic units of the team were the individual research projects, each of which was a partnership between a community-based partner and a university-based team member (see project list at the end of this chapter). Some projects were ready to go from the start, others were added later. The projects were grouped

into six sub-nodes (SN) according to themes. Each project sent representatives (typically both a university-based researcher and a community partner) to the SN Steering Committee led by a coordinator (two SNs had co-coordinators) responsible for facilitating the work of the SN, performing necessary administrative functions and liaising with the Node as a whole. In all but one case SNs tasked an academic with the role of coordinator. SN coordinators also represented the SN on the Node SC.[9] Community based partners were very active at the SN level and assumed roles as chairs / facilitators of meetings, organizers of events, alternates to Node SC meetings and so on). Individual SNs often met as a "committee of the whole," with active participation from all SN members.

At the SN level, responsiveness to members' needs, and transparent decision-making were priorities. SN partners came to know one another quite well through frequent, and often face-to-face communication. The SN steering committee solicited and approved projects, supported those conducting the research, managed the SN budget and protocols, received progress reports and bridged to the node (especially regarding administration, bridging matters, and node governance). SNs often organized their own mutual learning gatherings, knowledge dissemination events and community workshops. Each SN developed its own way of operationalizing participatory governance and indeed each developed a distinctive culture. Those involved in more than one SN helped bridge these subcultures. A password protected "team site" set up by the Community Sector Council was used as a repository for SN and node agendas, minutes, project reports, budgets and other documents which all team members could access.

Overall direction, integration and management of the SESRN (the node) were provided by the node SC, composed of representatives from the 6 SNs plus the network director. In addition to their coordinator, SNs often sent a community partner to the node SC meetings, so more than one SN member would have a view of the network from the perspective of the entire Node. Up to three students would typically attend each Node SC meeting, and would present on their work. From time to time government partners and other guests would attend SC meetings, and SESRN usually held some form of dissemination event when face-to-face governance meetings took place. The SC met at least three times a year, in Halifax or (usually at least once a year) at a SN location. While node SC meetings were in English, we tried, within the limitations of our funding, to be as inclusive as possible in both official languages (e.g., a website with both French and English platforms, translations of selected documents and simultaneous or whisper translations for team events). Individual team members and one of the organizational partners also helped in translating outputs from the network.

A management committee composed of the director and three co-directors (two academics and two community partners, all of whom were SC members) facilitated the work of the SC. This committee met on average 4 times per year, usually remotely. Over time, and at the request of the SC, more of the administrative and pre-planning was assigned to the management committee to free up time at steering committee meetings. This change only occurred after levels of trust had deepened and could not have been implemented early on.

The SC sought "wise counsel" from a range of different people over the years (e.g., for evaluations, for facilitating, for suggests about relations with government), and SNs did so as well.[10] The commitment to meet face-to-face where possible increased the opportunities to build trust and to reach decisions all could support. Investing in face-to-face meetings also made it possible for personal relationships to be forged, and for information about the research projects to be shared across the full team.

Early on, with input from the SNs, the node SC identified *seven foundational principles* against which to assess both the processes and products of our network: inclusivity, transparency, accountability, relationship building, mutual respect, consultative process, participatory and collaborative project governance, and research processes. The SC operationalized these principles by drafting, re-working and signing a memorandum of understanding for the SC which included commitments, roles and responsibilities, procedures for dealing with conflict, and information on conflict of interest. These documents were circulated to the SNs which reviewed them and, in turn, developed and signed their own MOUs.[11] In collaboration with the SNs, the node SC developed an internal communications plan as well as an external communication / dissemination plan. We recognized that there would be ebbs and flows in the levels of participation in governance - engagement is a continuum of processes.[12]

Though considered onerous by some at the time, this process proved helpful in getting to know one another and in coming to agreements about the elements of our governance and research. A community partner told Daughton (2011) "Personally, I think that the main partnership-building success was that there was attention paid to the meaningful participation of all partners from the very beginning … engagement wasn't just lip service." An academic offered a similar comment:

> … we made a conscious decision right off the top not to rush things, and we took the better part of a year to do just that [build the partnership]. The other thing that contributed to our success was that we decided to trust one another and to just share the money up front and put it in the hands of local committees [sub-nodes] who then did what they needed to do with it… I think these two decisions made this project a success.

Our first year of work resulted in a governance framework that fit the participatory research practices to which we committed. It allowed us to be flexible and innovative and to respond to concerns that were articulated along the way.

The Node Coordinator played a central role in supporting the governance processes. As the only person who was full time with the network, her role proved vital to the effective working, the participative qualities and the morale of the network. The position required diverse and high level skills in networking and facilitating, as well as strong administrative capabilities. The coordinator was "communications central," supporting positive relationships within the network as well as keeping track of products and activities, and alerting the Director to potential problems. Later in the course of the project we added an assistant position (a student) to support the node office's communication function.

Commenting on the work of the node office, one academic told Daughton (2011) "there was tremendous effort … to have these regular meetings and structure of the larger meeting and the smaller management committee. I raise my hat to them for how democratically they tried to engage and maintain this. I can tell you that in other projects things are not done like that."

b) Participatory action research (PAR) approach to developing and carrying out partnered research projects.

The second component of making partnerships work is developing methodologies that enable the co-creation of knowledge. SESRN committed to participatory action research (PAR) methodologies, which both produces strong research outcomes (Reason, 2000) and aligned with our seven guiding principles. McAulay (1999, p. 76) defines PAR as "a process of producing new knowledge by systematic inquiry with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for the purposes of education and taking action or effecting social change." It eschews "… the 'expert' delivery of knowledge from academics to the people" (Cuthill, 2010, p.22) and increases the likelihood that research findings will be used, since the knowledge and expertise of community groups is incorporated (Lomas, 1997) and because they have played a role in choosing and defining the research questions. Typically, research results are validated by presenting them to the groups from which the original data was obtained.[13] PAR aims: 1) to produce knowledge and action directly useful to the community being studied, and 2) to empower people through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge (Barnsley & Ellis, 1992).

As with participatory governance, operationalizing PAR in particular projects and at the node level had its challenges. Further, although using the same words, the various partners did not necessarily attribute the same meaning

to those words. One example was the strong objection community partners raised to the term "non-academic" used by SSHRC to categorize community-based participants in research projects. Our team substituted the term "community-based." A challenge requiring more ongoing effort was around "respect" - a term with many strands that took time to unravel. One aspect of respect related to the fact that community-based participants wanted recognition of the advanced educational credentials and research experience that many of them brought to the team, as well as of their grounded experience in organizations within the social economy.[14] The academics wanted their community activism valued as experience that they contributed to the research. In addition to using language differently, actors in the partnership differed in their emphasis, their expectations of one another, their sensitivities, and their views of what outputs and outcomes were the most important. PAR was interpreted differently within different projects as well.

Our decentralized structure allowed for such issues to be addressed within project teams and at the SN level where the link to SN themes was important. All research projects undertaken with the Network were approved by a SN and/or the node SC. Each had to identify both a university and a community based partner[15] who jointly developed and approved the project proposal, ethics applications, and dissemination commitments. Each proposal also had to demonstrate a contribution to the research themes of the network.[16] Variations in applying PAR approaches were accepted as long as the community and university partners could articulate and agree upon the key components. Workload was an issue for almost everyone, but especially for community-based partners.

Generally the individual projects succeeded in implementing their partnerships. A community partner told Daughton (2011) "It took a couple of years to really see that there are lots of academics who learned just as much working with community, and really honoured our practices, as much as I learned to really value what academics could offer to round out the work that we do." An academic remarked on "… the friendships that we established … the trust we built between us and how we felt that there was always opportunity to … be creative and come up with things that would really help people." Some stereotypes were challenged too – one government partner, frustrated with government colleagues who did not see the value of attending as guests at the various SESRN learning and dissemination events spoke up at a meeting to say "Don't tell me that university researchers don't care about community!"

Bridging across SNs proved challenging, even though SN membership overlapped to some degree. It helped that the node director and/or node coordinator visited every SN at least once each year, sometimes in person and sometimes via conference call, and were often present at key SN dissemination events. Still, it was difficult for team members to be fully informed about what

was happening in each SN – the secure team site was not as useful as we had anticipated for this purpose. Team meetings, always face-to-face, were absolutely fundamental in helping to address these concerns. Besides being valuable for bringing the team together in different SN locations, they functioned as networking, bridging and research reporting/dissemination venues, with at least part of the programme open to the public, local SE groups and targeted interested parties.[17] During these meetings the SN members also learned about the broad sweep of SESRN research. Regardless of the many channels put in place for internal communication, we heard repeatedly that nothing could replace face-to-face interactions.

Question 4: What is the Purpose of Partnering in Research - What are the Anticipated Outcomes?

This question arose in many guises over the life of the network – at the level of individual projects, SNs and full node. This network gobbled up energy and time. Why were we doing it? Table 3.1 gives indication of the sorts of anticipated outcomes that could draw participants to partner in research. Ultimately what provided staying power was the belief in common that the research was worthwhile, that the knowledge being generated was valuable, and that our work would lead to lasting benefits (individual, organizational and for the SE of the region). Many on the team valued the personal relationships and, especially, the networks they gained access to. Still, we were all aware that motives were mixed. For example, the community partners knew that universities needed to partner with community groups so as to attract SSHRC funding. Understandably wary of being used by academics, community partners looked for demonstrations of genuine commitments to partnership. The governance and PAR engagement processes and structures enabled the realization of these multiple reasons for partnering, with opportunities to reflect, dialogue and adapt. During the process of developing measures of success, individual projects, the SNs and node had to decide which priorities to emphasize and at what phases of the work. They also adressed issues of accountability. In all this, of course, SESRN was also guided by the criteria developed by SSHRC.

Question 5: To Whom is the Partnership Accountable for its Work?

The reality was that individuals within SESRN were accountable to a variety of different bodies and organizations. Early discussion of the implications of that reality helped reduce conflict within the partnership. For example, historic relationships and requirements of home institutions (and their criteria for assessing "success") can work against community-university research partnerships. Academics and community partners are held to account (by peers, by their home institutions and by funders) in different ways, and to different criteria. For example, SESRN community partners found that projects often

proceeded more slowly than they or their home organizations expected, with the consequence that results were not forthcoming as quickly as desired. SESRN academics sometimes felt that their engaged scholarship was not being valued by peers in the academy.

As with so much else about partnerships it is important to engage in dialogue about criteria and about accountability, taking advantage of natural opportunities to do so. For SESRN, these natural opportunities included: during project proposal development; while preparing research ethics applications; designing the node's project reporting forms; developing the node's internal and external communication plans; designing self-evaluation tools; preparing reports to SSHRC. One academic spoke to Daughton (2011) about accountability:

> But being rooted in the community organization and having to do research that is sensible to them, that makes a difference to them, is key to how you then conduct the whole thing, and in the pressures you then have, because there is responsibility and accountability to them, to deliver something that they can show they spent their time wisely … [and] because it is asking a lot of them in voluntary time.

A community partner commented:

> I've really been interested in the different priorities between community and academic research and how there isn't an easy balance in meeting everyone's needs. I found it enlightening in that I learned a lot from that. I wasn't really happy about that at times, but it was a really good opportunity to understand why it is the way it is and to think about how you take these two different needs (the need to publish and the need to do) and blend them into something that achieves the best we can, and reflect the different focuses.

Keeping records to demonstrate accountability was an ongoing challenge for many members of the team and complaints were frequently voiced to the node office - so much reporting, so many details, about so many different things. To illustrate, consider this comment from a community partner:

> If I'm at a meeting in Vancouver and talking to someone about what I learned from the SE project, I don't cite it, I don't put it on my CV. I'm using the information constantly ... I'm constantly using the knowledge that I've learned from this process ... but it's never getting recorded.

The areas of tension did not disappear, but dialogue helped build mutual understanding and led to strategies that helped sustain the partnership.

Outcomes – Evaluations of the SESRN Partnership

In this section I present a summary of the team's self-evaluations of the governance process and of the research process. While occasionally incorporating material from other sources, I draw primarily on the findings reported by Kienapple (2008) and by Daughton (2011).[18]

Using responses to 2 web-based surveys of the full team, Kienapple looked at governance within SESRN and at the research process.[19] Reporting on his evaluation of the governance process, Kienapple pointed to some very positive results with at least half of community and academic partners answering positively (strongly agree and agree) to all the survey questions. For example: the "mission, goals" and "structure and operations of the node/subnode" were valued by a strong majority of both community and academic partners, and they indicated growth in a "sense of community" (86% and 96% respectively). The one exception related to "opportunities for personal responsibility and growth," where among community-based respondents only 44% agreed or strongly agreed, while 38% were neutral – in part this was because of the different starting points for the organizations. In the words of one community-based respondent, "I and my organization were quite far along the social economy research continuum when we became engaged so there has been less growth opportunity to this point."[20] Among university-based team members this item had the lowest levels of agreement of all the items (58% agreed with 30% being neutral). Again some academics came to the team with significant experience already.

While positively evaluated by the majority of community respondents, "effectiveness of communication," and "needs being met in the governance process" were 2 additional areas where improvements would be desirable. A higher proportion of academic than of community-based partners were strongly positive about the governance processes, perhaps because they had less experience with participatory governance.

Reporting on his evaluation of research partnership (personal and organizational development) noted that a minimum of 74% of community partners and 84% of academic partners reported development in three of the thematic areas investigated. For example, significant "partnered research skill development" (74% of community members and 87% of academic members), increased "community and organizational development" (96% of community members and 84% of academic members), and "effective resource use enabling valuable projects" (70% and 80%). In relation to "organizational/group access to and use of information" 67% of community-based partners and 58% of university-based partners reported positively. This somewhat lower percentage was, in Kienapple's (2008, p. 4) opinion, in part a reflection of the fact that most research projects were in the early phases.[21] Both community and academic

members of the network reported significant increase in "knowledge and understanding of research topic" and "current information in the topic area" (88% of community members and 97% of academic members).

Kienapple concluded that both community and university participants valued the participatory organizational structure found in the Atlantic Node, and that the PAR approach offers a useful foundation for community-university partnerships. We were encouraged by the results of this evaluation and took away some ideas for strengthening the partnership. In particular at the Node level, we concluded that the partnership needed improvement in terms of internal communication within the network, gaining clarity regarding the benefits partners wished to gain, and the development of shared meanings. As one community partner indicated, "Nous utilisons les mêmes mots mais nous n'avons pas les mêmes interprétations et définitions de ces 'mêmes' mots." (We use the same words but we do not have the same interpretations and definitions for these 'same' words.)

When these results were reported at the 2008 team meeting in St. John's, they generated significant discussion. While the team members were generally satisfied that these finding reflected their experience, they strongly requested that Kienapple supplement the survey with interview and/or focus group data which would help deepen the understanding of people's responses.

Responding to the team's request for qualitative data, Daughton conducted a group self-evaluation after the final Steering Committee meeting and in 2010-11 he interviewed 22 team members (8 academics, 6 students and 8 community partners). He explored partnership building successes and hindrances (including efficacy of governance processes), lessons learned, the team's evaluation of knowledge mobilization, capacity-building, participant engagement and other project outcomes. Generally speaking, his findings supported Kienapple's, with indications of some improvement in communication and knowledge transfer. In a report that also provided information about the differences across SNs and across individual research projects, Daughton noted that "The successes and hindrances identified in this evaluation are consistent with the literature on successful collaborations." He found the results to be generally very positive though of course not without ideas for improvement.

More specifically, Daughton (2011) reported that partnership successes included the formation of good and productive working relationships, which resulted in increased credibility for both the community and the university–based partners. Team members felt that there was more awareness of the social economy than there had been. They valued the highly participatory approach to project development and governance while noting that some SNs were

closer to that model than others. Interestingly, tensions between academic and community needs were seen as both a help and a hindrance in partnership building – addressing the tensions led to fruitful discussion, but not always to complete resolution.

Participants liked the way the money was allocated, the autonomy given to SNs regarding decisions about projects, and the commitment to engagement demonstrated not only in governance processes but also by granting salary release for community-based partners (though more would have been better). By way of hindrances they noted time pressures, record keeping, and challenges of communicating across so many people and such substantial distances. Several commented that their personal knowledge and professional lives had been enhanced. Even those who came to the team knowing a lot about research and about the SE reported that they had gained a lot during the CURA – comments about enhanced networks figured prominently. For both academic and community partners, involvement in SESRN led to further funding opportunities as well as to "spin-off" projects (notably opportunities for future partnered research including involvement in new CURAs, and advantages of the linkages they had forged) and all spoke about the growth in their networks and in their perspective on the SE.

Community organizations were seen to be beneficiaries, not just individuals. "A couple of good pieces of work got done for us that we had no way of doing … it helped us to disseminate our work on an international level … the benefits have been many, to us." As for individual benefits consistent themes were the increased access to information and knowledge, funding for travel, and insight into the nature of the social economy. Academics benefitted as individuals and one academic remarked that "[through the network] we were able to create a critical mass [of social economy researchers] in Atlantic Canada." However, some felt that their universities did not benefit as much as they could have as they still do not recognize the imperative of changing the relationship between universities and communities. However, the increased stock of knowledge about the SE that team members and government partners commented upon favourably will affect teaching in the universities. Several academic partners noted that they can now modify existing courses and develop new ones. One commented that in retrospect it would have been good to develop a draft course outline and readings list that all professors could draw upon.

Daughton reported that, with some exceptions, people were generally satisfied with the extent of knowledge mobilization both within the network and outside, but several noted that there was a trade-off between the time spent on process and the ability to produce and disseminate findings. Others noted the negative impact of the significant amounts of administrative work associated with the CURA of such size and complexity.[22]

Information on policy impacts was not yet available to the team at the time of Daughton's interviews, but several commented that their organizations had acquired knowledge that would be useful in future policy discussions and advocacy work. Others mentioned policy work that would continue past the end of the CURA, for example "… I'm chairing this Advisory Committee [name] that continues that process of developing and engaging people around these concepts of social enterprise and social economy" (C2). Several commented on the long term potentials of the new Atlantic Council for Community and Social Enterprise, in which SESRN members played a significant role.

All respondents were positive about student involvement, and despite caveats about busy team members having limited time for consistent mentoring, students commented positively on the benefits they derived from the experience, especially from the respectful relationships, opportunities for genuine engagement and opportunities to present at conferences. Community partners were generally of the opinion that the knowledge generated through their projects would be used in their own organizations (e.g., for advancing policy proposals or for other work in their communities) and that they anticipated longer term implications for the region.

Concluding Observations

As we have seen, the deepest forms of partnership are characterized by transformative engagement. In a multi-layered, decentralized network such as SESRN, this is not easy to achieve. Among the inhibiting factors discussed above we noted the size and geographical reach of SESRN, historical relationships between the academy and the community, the learning curve for newly partnered community and academic partners, relationships with funders (SSHRC and any leveraged funding), and many other factors. Even at the project and SN levels it was a challenge. Further, the question of balance was important. As seen above, team members noted that it was often difficult to find the "right" balance between a focus on engagement processes and the actual "doing of the work." A related balancing act was that of giving priority to an internal focus while also reaching beyond our team.

SESRN was characterized by a mix of transformative and transitional forms of engagement. A little digging reveals incidents of more purely "transactional" relationships too. That said, there is also evidence that the nature of engagement changed over the course of individual projects and over the course of SESRN as a whole – ebbs and flows, crises navigated, opportunities missed or seized. While this chapter notes the impact of contextual factors, the type of engagement achieved also depends on the outcomes prioritized by network members. The SESRN partnership was shaped by our early answers to the questions "Who is included in the partnership?" and "What is partnered research?"

The time spent preparing for partnership, and the pairing of PAR approaches with participatory governance, contributed to the successes SESRN enjoyed. SESRN contributed to the stock of (co-produced) knowledge on the social economy of the region and of the various partners and "interested parties," including government. Team members have commented on how difficult (and exhausting) the work was at times, but also on how great the rewards have been. In many ways we found ourselves to be very much like the grass roots social economy itself. Decentralized and participatory structures and processes involving many different people and organizations can be challenging, but no more so than engaging in the social economy.

Team members expressed significant satisfaction about our productivity, the quality of our work, and the impact on us as individuals and (to a lesser degree, especially for academics) on our organizations. We never agreed on a single definition of the social economy, though within individual projects more precise definitions were developed, in keeping with the research foci and objectives of the particular project. While that bothered some, for most of the team there was satisfaction in finding agreement around the basic idea of a social economy and its worth, in Atlantic Canada in particular. With this came the confidence to use the term in our home organizations and networks, introducing students and the media to this way of framing and valuing the social economy, and providing government officials with reasons to pay attention. This was, in our region, a not inconsiderable achievement.

We created and nurtured professional, political, and social networks that offer promise of enduring into the future. Achieving this promise is, of course, conditional. To a considerable degree, the longer term impacts of SESRN are contingent on the fates of the individual and organizational members of the network, and on the ways the social economy is conceptualized by our provinces, regions, nation, the academy, the media, and among community activists. Will network members continue to work in and conduct research on the SE? Will the organizations survive these times of cutback and crisis? Will the term SE have currency, both as a framing concept and in more tangible ways (e.g., in policy, in university curricula)?

Partnerships between the academy and the SE community are vital to this momentum and to the generation of the knowledge base essential to its sustenance. Speaking about a community organization, one community partner reported:

> It truly did give us a window into what goes on with the SE community … It allowed us access to, and to share information with, a whole breadth of people who were doing work in sectors that apply to us … It created a whole new network of people who can provide us with information and opportunities we didn't have before.

An academic partner noted that:

> It made me aware of [the] broader SE and community and aware on many levels. Not just in the research and listening to the stories from other SE organizations in all those meetings and places where we could cross information, but in the teaching.

There is clearly an appetite for learning about the social economy and for doing so in collaborative ways. While this appetite cannot be satiated by one research network over a six year period, it is an appetite we can stoke and encourage by demonstrating that collaborative research can generate solid research results and increased capacity for both research and action. Indeed, many SESRN members are now part of successful new SSHRC-funded community-university research partnerships (regional, national and international in focus).They are involved in policy development, and a number are active in a new association which they helped to create, the Atlantic Council for Community and Social Enterprise (ACCSE). Networks now extend well beyond Atlantic Canada. In the words of one community partner:

> Throughout the Atlantic region, first of all, there are many more linkages. There is much more knowledge, much more information on who has what kinds of initiatives, [who is] doing what. That level of connectedness will continue long after the project is over.

Endnotes

1. I regret that it has proved impossible to do justice here to all the perspectives, the insightful positive and critical comments, and the reasoned reflections of the many members of the SESRN. I thank all who took part over the past 6 years of our work together.

2. Relations with the universities, and the structures mandated by these relationships (e.g., their financial offices and ethics boards) are not the focus here, though they clearly impacted the partnership. The universities both supported and created significant challenges for community-university relations within the network and for those administering the partnership.

3. Many useful descriptions of CURAs, and of community-based and engaged scholarship, are now available (e.g., http://www.msvu.ca/socialeconomyatlantic/English/CURAsE.asp; Cuthill, 2010; McNall et al., 2008; Vaillancourt, 2005; Jackson & Kassam, 2005; Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi, & Herremans, 2008) and helped in developing this table. So too, did comments made at the various planning meetings held early on in the SESRN's partnership.

4. While a salary release is appreciated, it is of limited help here. For small organizations especially, new hires are more like stopgaps than staff who can completely replace a person on salary release.

5. We deliberately used a broad conception of the term social economy, intending to explore its many meanings over the course of the research.

6. Sometimes people or organizations approached us, asking to join the network. Over the years, the team grew to over 80 individuals, 46 community organizations, 20 colleges and universities, 5 First Nation communities, and 12 government bodies across 4 provinces and departments of the federal government. While not all were active throughout the full term of the grant, many were. The SESRN also developed criteria for adding new team members.

7. This term is used by Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi, & Herremans (2008, p. iii) as one end of an engagement continuum: "Recognizing that the definitions of 'community' and 'engagement' vary across this literature, we cluster the sources into three main approaches to engagement: transactional, transitional and transformational." Though not focused on research partnerships per se, their study of over 200 partnerships between firms (including non-profits) and communities is germane.

8. Further, for various reasons engagement may not be genuine, despite the frameworks and agreements out in place. For example, transparency and openness may be promised but not delivered, or some of those making commitments to collaborate do not meet their commitments. The accumulation of too many discrepancies can destroy any partnership, whether transactional, transitional or transformative.

9. University-based coordinators were seen as best positioned to deal with university financial officers and ethics committees, to access to student assistants and other supports, and to have the time to devote to the work. We heard over and over again that the community partners found it difficult to take time off to travel and attend SC meetings of the Node. In one case, SN6, the community partner did take on the administration of the SN. That partner was also a member of the management committee of the Node.

10. Examples include contributions during team meetings such as Yves Vaillancourt's presentation on community-university research alliances in Quebec and Yohanan Stryjan's involvement in a team meeting where he shared his experience with social economy research in Europe.

11. The Network also developed Guidelines for the Node Steering Committee (which SNs further adapted to their own needs), addressing a variety of issues, including: allocation of funds for hiring graduate students; travel support and computer purchases; establishing quorum and regular agenda items for meetings; decision making in the absence of consensus; grievance procedures, project proposal and reporting templates; student feedback forms; criteria for Network membership; SSHRC reporting requirements; and so on.

12. At our first team meeting, Ivan Emke (co-coordinator of SN6) spoke about Tuckman's (1965) model of group development which was characterized by the stages of forming, norming, storming and performing. We gave considerable attention to forming and norming, hoping that would allow us to weather any storming, and to excel at performing.

13. Things do not always go smoothly. For example, community partners may not like the findings of the research, or they may feel that making them public could hurt the organization. The academic researchers may find it challenging to be scrutinized by groups outside academia which apply different evaluation standards. In SESRN such potential problems were anticipated, at least to some degree, as partners co-produced individual project proposals and agreements.

14. Indeed, one of the characteristics of the social economy is that much of its workforce is highly educated (Gardner Pinfold, 2010, p. 9)

15. The very few exceptions had to be approved at the Node level and were generally in response to calls for proposals to undertake particular pieces of research (e.g., policy scans).

16. The original five network themes were addressed at the SN level. The precise content of these themes evolved over the course of the partnership and five additional themes were identified. We were not always able to find time and personnel to synthesize findings across projects within a theme to the degree that we had hoped. We drew on ad hoc committees (with membership drawn from interested SNs) to help with synthesis of findings.

17. The only province in which we did not hold a team meeting was PEI. However, the Steering Committee did meet there once. This provided an opportunity for SN members to meet the committee informally, and for the SC to hear formal presentations from members of the SN. Materials from team meetings were posted to the public website.

18. I single these out because they were the most comprehensive in scope. However, for us evaluations were ongoing. All node events were evaluated; SNs conducted their own evaluations of events and of SN governance; individual projects conducted evaluations.

19. Kienapple looked at governance in relation to 10 thematic areas. These were: Clarity of vision and goals; Structure and operation of the Node/Subnode; Methods used to involve participants/communications; Effectiveness of meetings; Opportunities for participant responsibility and growth; Planning, implementation and evaluation of projects from an operational point of view; Effectiveness of use of resources (governance and projects); Actions taken to create sense of community; Needs being met in the governance process; Relationships established with relevant individuals and organizations that interact with the Node/Subnode. (There was a 49% response rate.) In evaluating the research process, he explored 4 thematic areas: Personal knowledge development; Personal research skill development; Organizational access to and use of information; Community and organizational development (For this piece there was a 26% response rate; in part because it was difficult to answer the questions for projects still early in their progress.) The data was collected in 2007.

20. The survey offered room for additional comments and some took up this offer.

21. This explanation received some support in that in their evaluations of the 2008 team meeting and dissemination event, where every project had a poster, team members expressed delight at the range and quality of the research being conducted by the network and were pleased to have access to it. All the materials from that meeting were available to the full team on the public website soon after the meeting.

22. Note that during the extension period (2010-11) the team focused almost entirely, and successfully, on dissemination. Team members now have access to substantially more material on SE-Space and the public website.

23. The right hand column suggests some of the main qualities to seek and to monitor for each of the dimensions of transformational partnerships, informed by the research literature, personal experiences, conversations within the SESRN, and articles and presentations by SESRN members. An earlier version of this table was developed by Brown and Hicks (2010), and both versions have been heavily influenced by Bowen et al (2008: 14).

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Table 3.2: Enabling a Transformational Approach to Research Partnership[23]

KEY DIMENSIONS (Elaborating on how partnerships should work)	QUALITIES TO SEEK AND TO MONITOR
1. Values and Principles in which the partnership is rooted (setting the stage)	▪ Consensus on these values and principles (including principles for decision making) ▪ Consensus on overarching research themes and questions ▪ Respect diversity and divergent opinions (e.g., re. definition of the SE); developing some shared language
2. Control over processes (governance and research)	▪ Shared as widely as possible and as team decides is appropriate ▪ Representative, participatory, and decentralized governance ▪ Participatory Action Research Methodologies ▪ Clarity of roles and responsibilities achieved via MOUs, detailed project proposals, and ethics applications
3. Number of partners	▪ Manageable number (smaller numbers work better) ▪ Appropriate to the objectives ▪ Adequately funded
4. Interactions within the partnership	▪ Frequent, rooted in face-to-face as much as possible (especially in the early days) but also using available technologies ▪ Appropriate to the needs of the network
5. Communications (internal and external)	▪ Guided by an agreed-upon communication plan ▪ Frequent ▪ Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral ▪ Respectful
6. Flexibility Adaptability	▪ Willingness to adapt and change as network develops and agrees on processes for doing this – iterative process
7. Trust	▪ Trust based on relational is likely to be the strongest ▪ Fortified by clarity of roles and expectations
8. Learning	▪ Jointly generated collaborative learning ▪ Research results shared
9. Benefits and outcomes	▪ Mutual and/or compatible ▪ Supporting one another in making space / time for particularized benefits to be realized too
10. Monitoring	▪ Self-evaluation of process and of deliverables / products / outcomes in relation to goals and commitments ▪ Responding to the results of these self-evaluations

An earlier version of this table was developed by Brown and Hicks (2010), and both versions have been heavily influenced by Bowen et al (2008: 14)

Table 3.3: Atlantic Social Economy Research Node

There are 8 projects under Sub-node 1:

1.1 Survey of Co-ops and Credit Unions in Atlantic Canada
1.2 Atlantic Node Community Partners' Profiles
1.3 Fishing for the Future II: Tracking the Coastal Communities Network from First Beginnings to Economic Sustainability
1.4 Government Policies that Support Community Organizations in the Sustainable Management of Watershed Groups: Analysis of Politics and Recommendations 1.4 Les politiques gouvernementales comme support aux organismes communautaires de gestion viable des groupes de basins versants : analyses des politiques et recommandations
1.5 Profile of the Old and the New Social Economy to the Development of the Community of Acadian Islands (Lamèque and Miscou). 1.5 Profil de l'ancienne et de la nouvelle économie sociale dans le développement territorial des Îles acadiennes (Lamèque et Miscou)
1.6 Policies that Support Bridging, Bonding and Building between Government and the Social Economy in Atlantic Canada
1.7 SES Research Network Policy: Threads Inventory and Analysis
1.8 Cultural Co-operatives in Atlantic Canada: Progress and Governance

There are 15 projects under Sub-node 2:

2.1 Launching Rural Women's Entrepreneurship
2.2 Community Accounts – PEI
2.3 Youth Engagement in Hillsborough Park (Global Culture, Local Meanings and Contested Community): Redefining Youth Apathy
2.4 Advocating Changes to Maternity & Parental Benefits Legislation
2.5 The Role of Women in the Fishery and Fisheries Management
2.6 Mapping Supports for the Social Economy
2.7(A) Indigenous Community Development: Phase I – Ethnobotany
2.7(B) Indigenous Community Development: Phase II – Microenterprise
2.7(C) Indigenous Community Development: Phase III – Youth Engagement with Community and Natural Resources
2.8 PEI Organic Farmer-Citizen Co-operative
2.10 Access of Adults with Learning Disabilities to Post-Secondary Education
2.11 Internationally Educated Health Professionals in PEI: Why They Come, Why They Stay and the Challenges They Face.
2.14 Beyond Silence
2.17 Community Engagement in Developing Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products
2.18 Quality of Life and Environmental Awareness Survey

There are 6 projects under Sub-node 3:

3.1 Food Box Program: Current and Potential Contributions to the Social Economy
3.2 Community Forum on Food Security and the Social Economy
3.3 Mobilization around Food Security within the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships: A National Scan
3.4 Identification of Barriers and Tools to Support Community Mobilization and Action on Sustainable Food Purchasing Decisions
3.5 Making Healthy, Local Food Possible: Rural Community Solutions
3.6 Forum on Community Food Security and the Social Economy

There are 9 projects under Sub-node 4:

4.1 Social Economy and Watershed Groups on the Acadian Coast 4.1 Économie Sociale et groupes de bassin-versant sur le littoral acadien
4.2 Public Participation in Forestry Management: Experiences, Perceptions and Expectations of the Social Economy in New Brunswick. 4.2 Participation publique en gestion forestière : Expériences, perceptions et attentes des organismes de l'économie sociale du Nouveau-Brunswick
4.3 Alternative Farming Practices and Food Security at the Really Local Cooperative 4.3 L'utilisation de compost comme pratique visant une plus grande viabilité des sols chez les fermiers du Sud-Est du Nouveau-Brunswick (La Coopérative de la Récolte de Chez-Nous (RCN))
4.4 Acceptabilité sociale des pratiques aquacoles dans le sud du Golfe du St-Laurent
4.5 New Social Economy, Reinforcing the Capacities of Coastal Communities in Delivering Services to Citizens in Relation to Rising Sea Levels on the Acadian Littoral of New Brunswick. 4.5 Nouvelle économie sociale, renforcement des capacités des collectivités côtières dans la livraison de services aux citoyens face à la hausse du niveau marin sur le littoral acadien du Nouveau-Brunswick.
4.6 Climate Change and Medicinal Plants in the Mi'kmaq Communities of Eel River Bar and d'Elsipogtog 4.6 Changements climatiques et plantes médicinales dans les communautés Mi'kmaq d'Eel River Bar et d'Elsipogtog
4.7 Contribution des coopératives d'artisanat autochtone à l'économie des Premières Nations aux provinces maritimes 4.7 Contribution of Aboriginal Craft Cooperatives to the Economy of First Nations in the Maritime Provinces
4.8 Impacts of the NB Regulatory Process on the Small Scale Cranberry Farmer
4.9 Quelles mesures permettraient d'inciter le transport non motorisé dans la région du Grand Moncton

There are 8 projects under SN5:

5.1 Financing the Social Economy
5.2 Fogo Island Cooperative
5.3 Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Cooperative Accounting
5.4 Halifax Independent School-Performance Measures
5.5 Diagnostic Tool for Co-operative Firms
5.7 Measuring the Co-op Difference
5.8 Guide to Choosing an Enterprise Form
5.10 Employment Law for Canadian Worker Co-operatives

There are 8 projects under SN6:

6.1 Bridges and Pathways, or Detours and Dead Ends: Evaluating a Collaborative Web Community
6.2 Introducing a Web Community Software to a Complex Social Economy Organization
6.3 The Development of Open-Source Web Community Software
6.4 The Uses and Gratifications of Communication Technologies for Social Economy Actors: A Survey of Atlantic SE Organizations' Use of Communications Tools
6.5 Community Sector Forum: Testing an Inclusive Approach to Engaging Community Sector Leaders in a Discussion about Key Issues and Challenges Facing the Sector
6.6 But I Sent You the E-mail: Exploring E-mail's Effectiveness as a Promotional Medium within the Community Sector
6.7 Evaluating the Utility of Webinars as an Information and Communications Technology
6.8 Analysis of Community-Based Radio as a Communication Tool for Groups in the Social Economy

There are 3 projects under the Node office:

N.1 Mount St. Vincent University Library Project I: Social Economy Subject Guide
N.2 Library Project II – Web-based Research Tools for Social Economy Atlantic, Social Economy Space
N.3 Mapping the Social Economy with Mi'kmaq communities

There are 8 projects under Student projects:

S.2 Let Them In, But Keep Them Out: Liminality of the First-born Chinese Prince Edward Islanders
S.3 Domestic Violence Research Project
S.4 The Policy Context for Co-operatives in New Brunswick
S.5 Cultivating Food Security in NS Public Schools: A Case Study of the Gaspereau Valley Elementary School Garden Project
S.10 Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland: A Comparative Assessment of Two Islands As Viable Destinations for Immigrant Entrepreneurs
S.11 Contribution d'une enterprise d'économie sociale à l'alimentation de proximité et à la sécurité alimentaire: le cas de la RCN dans le sud-est du NB
S.12 At the Intersection of a Crisis? Examining the Ability of New Brunswick's Non-Profit Organizations to Meet the Need for Home Care in the Twenty-First Century
S.13 Examining the Risk of Lost Knowledge with Personnel Changes in Small Non-profit Organizations on PEI

For further information on each of these projects, visit:
http://msvu.ca/socialeconomyatlantic/English/projectsE.asp

CHAPTER 4

Proposal for Evaluating the Research Partnership Process

Denis Bussières and Jean-Marc Fontan
Quebec Node and University of Quebec at Montreal

Translation: Elizabeth Carlyle & Jonathan Martineau

Over the course of the last few years, granting agencies from many countries have supported the setting up of programs designed to develop joint efforts between university-based researchers and practitioners. This support reflects a will to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge produced by university-based researchers. We can see that the underlying hypothesis rests on the idea that a greater proximity between scientific "producers" of knowledge and the potential users, be they political decision-makers, social leaders or workers, could increase the potential impact of such knowledge on the development of society. The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of our reflections on the degree of participation of field workers in the course of conducting research partnerships.

Since 2010, the Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada (CRSH, 2007) has made this bridge-building between « science » and « society » one of the major axes of the new architecture of research programs that are available to scholars and social actors. The Fonds québécois de recherche sur la société et la culture, a provincial fund dedicated to university researchers, has a long tradition of trying to reduce the distance between "university and society"[1] (FQRSC, 2007).[2] The same observation can be made about private research foundations, which are increasingly supporting this type of research.

Running parallel to the will of granting agencies to encourage the development of closer relationships between the spheres of academic research and community practices is the increasing growth of the movement of community-based research and science shops, in Canada, the United States and Europe. (Flicker & Saban, 2006; Mulder & De Bok, 2006).[3] This movement promotes the importance of community-based organizations using the development of academic knowledge as a central tool in the process of reaching their goals of social change or political struggle.

Finally, let us not forget that universities and colleges across the country have also expressed the will to increase the mobilisation of knowledge in the realisation of their mission (Association of University and Colleges of Canada, 2008). Such a will is also shared by scholars and academics in many countries,

giving rise to networking activities around the globe, an illustration of which is the creation of the Global Alliance on Community-Engaged Research in May 2008.[4] Finally, to make this work strategy even more legitimate, we must answer the question of the efficiency of such an approach. A research project conceived to measure the degree of participation of non-university actors' in research in partnership was realised in 2009. We participated in the project with the mandate of identifying evaluation indicators to determine the quality of the relation in research partnerships between university researchers and practitioners. Let it be remembered that this project was financed by the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.[5]

The avowed goal of a research partnerships is to unite the world of academic research and the world of practice. This is not a new idea; it had served as a basis for the creation of a number of research institutes and research centers in the United States in the 1930s (Huberman, 1994-1995). Nowadays, this preoccupation takes on a new meaning to the extent that social and economic development relies heavily on the production and dissemination of new knowledge which is used by a variety of actors (UNESCO, 2005).

A Definition

Generally, when one speaks of research partnerships, one is referring to research undertaken jointly by researchers and practitioners. To fully understand the concept of research partnerships, one must go beyond the simplistic notion implied and describe the research more concretely. There is no consensus around the term research partnership. Depending on researchers or disciplines, it may also be called action research (*recherche-action)*, collaborative research (*recherche collaborative*), or participatory research (*recherche participative*), or some call it interventionist research (*recherche-intervention*), collaborative learning (*apprentissage collaboratif),* or training research (*recherche-formation*).

All these terms embody the dynamism of this movement that seeks to "link theory and practice, to take into account the voice of practitioners or local players in the generation of a certain knowledge of their practice" (Couture, Bednarz, & Barry, 2007, p. 208, translation from French). The same dynamic language appears in English, as one speaks of "community-based research," "community-based participatory research" and "university-community partnerships." Putting differences among the terms aside, all of these forms of research seek to break the traditional research mould, where actors are merely research subjects. All of these community-oriented research methods also subscribe to and participate in change in practices and social change.

Throughout this paper, the Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale (ARUC-ÉS) and Réseau québécois de recherche partenariale en économie sociale (RQRP-ÉS) term "research partnership" will be used to

describe research undertaken jointly by researchers and practitioners. ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS activities have important spin-offs that promote the recognition and development of the social economy. On the one hand, the ARUC-ÉS and the RQRP-ÉS lead, co-ordinate or participate in meetings intended to initiate or provide food for thought on concerns relating to the social economy sector. Examples from the work done in ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS follow:

- Their role at the Symposium sur le financement de l' économie sociale ("Symposium on Financing the Social Economy");
- The colloquium entitled, Le lodgement communautaire: developer en partenariat ("Community Housing: Growing in Partnership");
- The seminar, L' insertion sociprofessionnelle, une réponse à la pauvreté ("Addressing Poverty: Social and Occupational Integration");
- and the workshop, Investir solidairement ("Solidarity-based Investment") within the framework of the Sommet del' économie sociale et solidaire ("Social and Solidarity Economy Summit").

On the other hand, their research activities help to identify actual situations and a better understanding of the dynamics of a particular social economy sector or territory. Examples of work done would include:

- the *Symposium sur le financement du lodgement communautaire,* ("Symposium on Financing Community Housing");
- the *Projet de recherché sur le squinze ans de la table de concertation Vivre Saint Michelensanté* (VSMS, "Research Project on the First Fifteen Years of the Community Round Table on Healthy Living in Saint-Michel");
- and the project, *Contribution de l' économie social eau développement des milieu ruraux: le cas du Bas-Saint- Laurent* ("Contribution of the social economy to the development of rural environments: the case of the lower St. Lawrence")

For a full list of projects undertaken by the Quebec Node of the CSERP, see Table 4.1 (located at the end of the chapter).

Research Initiated by Practitioners

In our experience in research partnerships, the research questions usually come from the field. Practitioners are at the heart of defining these questions, as opposed to traditional university research, in which hypotheses are generated by scholarly study. As the the Center for Community-Based Research emphasizes, a research partnership "begins with a research topic of practical relevance to the community (as opposed to individual scholars) and is carried out in community settings"[6] Research partnerships are embedded in the questions that arise in the field, and focus on questions arising from the application of knowledge. Thus,

the practitioners participate in the formulation of research objectives. Research partnerships imply "the co-construction by a researcher and a practitioner of a research goal"[7] (Desgagné, 1997, p. 372), translation from French). It is not simply a matter, therefore, of problematizing issues that arise in the field, but of building, together, a research question.

The Co-construction of Knowledge

Practitioners not only define research goals, they also play an active role in the process of generating knowledge; in one sense, they also become knowledge producers. As Desgagné notes, "these practitioners become, at some point or other in the research process, 'co-creators' of the knowledge sought vis-à-vis the research goals" (1997, pp. 372-373, translation from French).

Participation in the process of knowledge creation is a fundamental characteristic of research partnerships: "participation in the products and process of research by people who experience the issue being studied is considered fundamental to CBPR" (Viswanathan et al., 2004, p. 22). Research partnerships are defined by research conducted with the actors or the communities, rather than about the actors or the communities.

Here, it is important to distinguish partnership from collaboration. Collaboration limits the role of the actors to "facilitating the collection of data, the recruitment of subjects, access to archives, access to statistics" (Simard, 2001, p. 1, translation from French), and aims to create the conditions required by the researcher in a given milieu. In contrast, partnership implies greater involvement of practitioners in the entire research process. This process includes identifying target populations, involvement in the creation of tools for gathering data, and participation in the analysis of the findings and in the drafting of any reports.

Mobilization of Knowledge

Research partnerships also differ from traditional research when it comes to disseminating findings. In traditional research, the dissemination of research findings is sometimes limited to academic journals, while, in research partnerships, practitioners play a key role in the communication of the research results to their peers. For this reason, they participate in the development of communication tools, the identification of target audiences, and even the dissemination of the work itself (PowerPoint presentations, colloquia, seminars). In a research partnership, therefore, the different organizations that participate are even expected to use the research findings so that this knowledge can be used to influence, modify or even overhaul practices.

Research partnerships differ at every stage from traditional research, whether that is at the point of defining the object of study in the research process, or in the application of knowledge by the participating organizations.

The Challenge of Evaluating Research Partnerships

Evaluation

To tackle the question of evaluation is to venture onto a path littered with obstacles. The evaluation process exposes questions of methodology (how to evaluate); political problems (by whom and for whom); and ethical problems (whose values underlie the act of evaluating). Over the years, the methods and objectives specific to evaluation have evolved: "over the past two centuries, evaluation, in education and other domains, has undergone a profound transformation: as a result of public scrutiny, evaluation now constitutes an autonomous discipline with precise rules and methods" (Fontan & Lachance, 2005, p. 4, translation from French).

In their book, *Fourth Generation Evaluation*, Guba and Lincoln (1989) propose dividing the evolution of evaluation into four generations, with each generation characterized by a distinct concern or perspective. According to Fontan and Lachance, a fifth generation, "based on the recognition of its raison d'être and on the support given to it by the community" (2005, p. 7, translation from French), currently exists. For the purposes of this paper, these interesting debates will be set aside, and we will return to the basic principles that will guide the present discussion.

To evaluate is to pass judgement with reference to a model or an objective that serves as the basis for the evaluation. "This judgement allows for the measurement of a gap, whether or not it exists, between a given, very real situation, and the expected or desired situation" (Fontan, 2001, p. 12, translation from French). As far as we are concerned, it is a matter of passing judgement on the research partnership process and its results. To evaluate "data collection must be methodical and comparisons must have a referent" (Centraide du Grand Montréal, 2004, p. 13). Based on the research partnership model developed at ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS, a questionnaire that allows for the collation of information on the research process and results has been developed.

The research framework proposed here does not call for external evaluators, but rather rests in the hands of the actors in the research partnership. It is an "analytical evaluation [framework] …, more useful for controlling and improving its own work" and "should allow for the transfer of what is known about one experience to another experience or to actions in the same domain" (Hiernaux, 2001, p. 84, translation from French).

Before getting to the heart of the proposal, it is important to distinguish the research partnership evaluation process from the process of change in which it is embedded.

Research Partnerships are Part of a Broader Process

As has been mentioned above, research partnerships are often part of a broader process that, ultimately, seeks to make change: changes in practice, political change (advocacy), or social change (improvement of health, living conditions, etc.). The hoped for change far surpasses the research objectives specific to the research partnership, and involves different actors and actions that differ from the basic research process. Some of these include community facilitation, training, citizen action, and the formation of coalitions with other actors in the community who are not involved in the research.

Two examples.

Two examples will help illustrate this concept. The first one in not mentioned in Table 4.1, but the second is.

Example 1

In a study of laws governing property assessments for recreational organizations, exploratory research was conducted to examine the assessment tables for different municipalities, with the goal of identifying any errors and inconsistencies in the application of laws. The participating organization's goal was to propose changes to relevant legislation to ensure equitable application in all jurisdictions (Huot, 2002).

In this example, even if the research is undertaken in partnership and the results show mistakes in the application of the law, the goal of legislative change requires more resources than solely the research results (notably political pressure, meetings with elected officials, participation in coalitions). To evaluate the research partnership on whether or not the laws are changed would be to base this evaluation on research elements over which it has little or no control. Here, the research project is only one of several elements that supports the process of change.

Example 2

As part of a campaign to fight marginalization and poverty in one area of a municipality, a study was undertaken with residents in order to identify their perception of the problems in the area and to understand their expectations for changes to be made in the social fabric and urban geography of their community. The goal for the organization participating in the research is, ultimately, to put in

place a citizens' committee that could take the concerns of the neighbourhood's residents and implement practical solutions to the problems identified in the survey (Fontan & Rodriguez, 2009).

Once again, the research is taking place within a wider sphere. The research project is just one of the elements that will inform the work of the campaign organisers. Ultimately, solutions to the problems experienced by the residents of the area will require actions that go beyond the results of the research partnership.[8]

When one speaks of evaluating research partnerships, it seems essential to distinguish this evaluation from the evaluation of the broader process of which the research partnership is a part. Without exception, research partnerships provide only a snapshot of a much bigger and more complex process. To confuse these two evaluations is to not do justice to the process specific to the research partnership. In a sense, this would give the research partnership impossible powers and goals. It also ignores the fact that it "must be possible to attribute [change] to action; in other words, [change] occurs because of [the action]" (Centraide du Grand Montréal, 2004, translation from French). Thus, change, in particular social change, often requires many and complex actions. This explains why evaluating social change can be so difficult.

For this reason, it is important to differentiate the evaluation of the partnership process from the evaluation of the goal for change that is the overarching motivation for the research partnership. In the following section, a procedure for evaluating research partnerships is proposed.

Evaluation of the Partnership Process

To evaluate research partnerships, one must get to the heart of the very research process in order to understand the different moments and actions that result in its successful completion. A paper entitled *La recherche partenariale: le modèle de l'ARUC-ÉS et du RQRP-ÉS (*ARUC-ÉS & RQRP-ÉS, 2007) provides inspiration and guidance. The part of this evaluation model that addresses the impact of the research on the practitioner or organization participating in the research is employed here. A parallel process could also be put in place to evaluate the impact on researchers, students or the university as a whole.

Research Phases

Research partnerships are defined by three essential steps or phases: the co-definition of research goals, the co-implementation of the research project, and the mobilization of the resulting knowledge. Each of these phases must be deconstructed, to determine the actions required for the project to be successful.

Co-definition of the research project. Deconstruction involves posing a series of questions for each phase. The answers to these questions allow for the formulation of an opinion as to whether the partnership process has been a success or failure.

The first question goes back to the start: Who initiated the project? Was a working group comprising researchers and practitioners established? Next, it can be asked: How this project contributed to the work of practitioners? Did this project aim to support a process of awareness-raising, training, social change, or change in practices? Does it allow the participating organization to better understand the socio-political landscape? All these questions aim to anchor the project in the needs in the field. Usually, if the project is well-grounded in the field, the spin-offs can be anticipated from the very beginning.

Once the beginning phase is complete, it is time to think about project operations. Will a working group comprised of researchers and practitioners be established in order to ensure the project is carried out? Has this working group been involved in defining the project and establishing the research plan? How will decisions on managing financial and other resources be made?

The definition phase, including the establishment of a research team, is crucial. It is at this moment that a climate of trust is established between the partners. This phase paves the way for the smooth implementation of the project. The initial agreement provides the foundation on which the partners can lean.

Co-implementation of research. Once again, a series of questions allows for a more concrete assessment of the participation of practitioners in the implementation of the research project. Did the practitioners take part in the determination and implementation of the research tools (questionnaires, identification of the target audience, surveys)? Did they take part in analyzing the findings, drafting research reports, and drafting the final report? Questions could also be asked about the number of working group meetings and whether the participating organizations integrated the researchers and students into the research process.

Mobilization of knowledge. The mobilization of knowledge can be examined on two levels. The first is concerned with diffusion of research results and the second, the transfer of knowledge, which speaks to the transformation of new knowledge into practice.

As with the other phases, it is a matter of determining the effective participation of practitioners in knowledge mobilization. Did the practitioners participation in the implementation of the communications tools and the identification of target audiences? Did they take part in the development of strategies for disseminating information? Did they collaborate in the

communications work? Did the participating organization contribute logistically, financially, or in other ways?

The results. Research partnerships are not just about process - each research project has its own objectives; for example: profiling an issue, a study of a certain population. In fact, there are as many research topics as there are specific objectives. The results are more than the production of a report. They are related to action. And the relation between knowlwedge and action must not be left out of the evaluation process of partnership research, as it is what the actors' expects. They are willing to see the new knowledge produced help them in their actions, help them transform situations that are problematic.

Research results can be seen as internal to the research, or external and linked to the social change in which they are embedded. Internally, has the research met the expectations established at the outset? Have the deliverables materialized (book, manual, summary, synthesis, etc.)? Was the partnership process satisfactory in terms of the partnership relationships?

Externally, there is the question of whether the research is useful. Were the actors able to use the results? And, finally, did the results make a significant contribution to change? One indicator of success is linked to the transformation of behavior (individual or collective). One question that could be asked is whether, after completion of the research, people in the organization or the organization itself were able to change behaviors in the way recommanded or proposed by research's findings.

This series of questions regarding the different phases of research partnerships and their results is synthesized in Table 4.1. These questions can be used to evaluate these partnerships.

Proposed Evaluation Model

Based on the questions itemized in Table 4.1, we propose a tool for evaluating the true participation of practitioners in the research partnerships process. It is in a Yes/No format, in order for the questionnaire to be easy to complete (see Table 4.1). Note that this questionnaire is designed to evaluate both the participation of practitioners and whether the expected results in the process of change have been achieved.

Counting the number of "yes" answers for each dimension of the questionnaire of evaluation, we can work this information with a graphic production programme that will produced a figure that will represent the answers given to the four conditions required to evaluate if a given research project is really done in partnership. We call this figure a "research partnership space" (see Figure 4.1).

Table 4.1: Evaluation of Research Partnerships

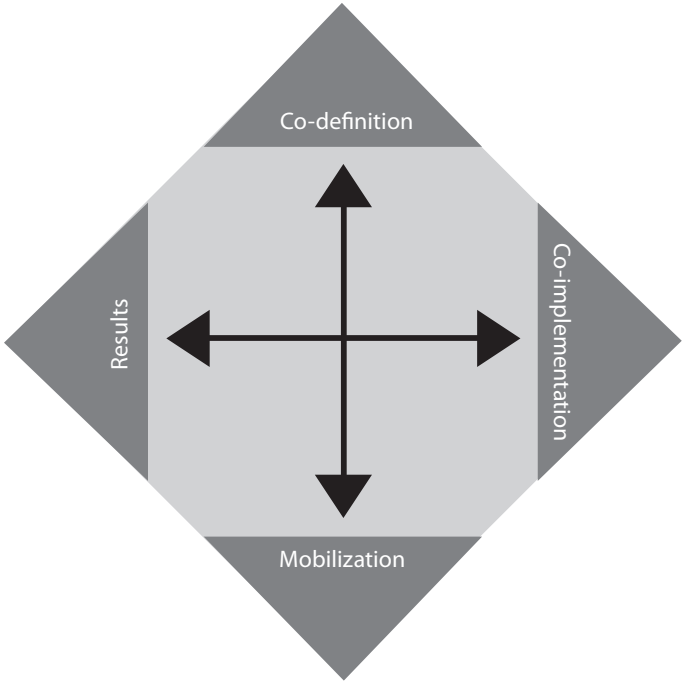
Co-definition Phase	Yes	No
Participation of practitioners in defining the project		
Participation in establishing project goals		
Participation in drafting a research method		
Identification of potential practical applications		
Establishment of a working group		
Participation in financial management		

Research Co-implementation Phase	Yes	No
Participation in defining the research tools (questionnaire, audience)		
Analysis of results		
Draft report-writing		
Final report-writing		
Researchers integrated into the organization		
Regular meetings of the working group		

Knowledge Mobilization Phase	Yes	No
Participation in developing communications strategy		
Participation in developing communication tools		
Identification of target audiences		
Participation in dissemination activities		
Logistical support from organization		
Regular meetings of the working group		

Research	Yes	No
Meets expectations		
Produces deliverables		
Satisfied with the research partnership process		
Results are useful		
Results are being used		
Has a positive effect on the area targeted for change		

Figure 4.1: Research Partnership Space



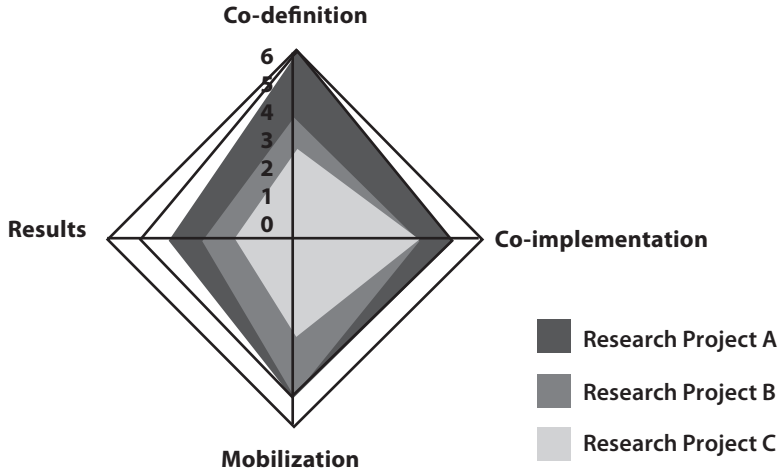
By counting the "yes" responses for each of the four dimensions along the four directions created by the two axes, we can evaluate how any given research project corresponds to the research partnership model. That is, we can determine where a project falls in the "research partnership space" by responding to the three conditions and by the presence of positive results for practitioners. In this way, we can identify the most successful research projects and those that require improvement.

Using the following Table 4.2, which shows the results for three research projects, we can map out the place occupied by each project in the research partnership space.

Table 4.2: Example of the Evaluation of Research Partnerships

Phases	Research Project A	Research Project B	Research Project C
Co-definition	6	4	3
Co-implementation	5	4	4
Mobilization	5	5	3
Results	4	3	2

Figure 4.2: Example of the Research Partnership Space



Analyzing this diagram, we can see that research project A is very successful in terms of co-definition, and that it also surpasses the other two projects when it comes to co-implementation. It received the same score in the area of mobilization as research project B, and it has the strongest results. For each research project, we can see the strong points and the areas for improvement. According to the representation above, we see that research project C is a difficult fit for the research partnership model.

This proposed tool for research partnerships can be improved and detail can be added. In this way, a version could be developed to include the academic aspects of the project, thus allowing for, among other things, an evaluation of the impact of the research on students' learning, of publication in scientific journals, and of its contributions to the university community. Our model focuses, above all else, on the main steps in a research partnership, from the point of view of practitioners.

Conclusion

The importance of research partnerships is evident when one considers that knowledge production is a collective process that involves a variety of actors and objects in specific places and at well-defined times. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) book on the social construction of reality made it possible to start a debate on the complexity of the knowledge production process. Then, the work of Latour and Woolgar (1988) and Callon (1992) furthered this approach by showing how the research process pulls in a variety of actors and objects that

eventually form a laboratory from which new knowledge emerges. It is crucial to depersonalize and de-individualize the process of knowledge production.

Does this mean that there is no longer any room for the traditional, more linear methods of constructing knowledge? Not really, that world also has a role to play. But it is also important to open up the kingdom of science to actors and intellectuals for whom science is not their primary job. The act of taking into consideration the intellectual wealth of non-scientist actors and creating mechanisms to co-construct knowledge constitutes a major qualitative leap in this regard.

The previous section on research partnerships allowed us to distinguish the advantages of producing knowledge in partnership mode. The central argument concerns the possibility of mobilizing knowledge and resources, which traditional research does not allow.

What dangers may be associated with such openness?

The first concerns the central role that researchers need to play or exert in the mechanisms for the co-construction of knowledge. This is a role that combines the functions of leadership, translation, mediation, non-negotiability, listening and modesty.

- Leadership to ensure that standard practices are respected and the co-production is not diverted from a certain level of objectivity – that there is always room for criticism.
- Translation to ensure that the stakeholders understand each other.
- Mediation to facilitate the development of compromises and negotiations.
- Non-negotiability to know when to put a halt to co-construction operations because the process requires the stakeholders to withdraw to their own camps for a while.
- Listening to make it easier to inject issues that, at first glance, might appear disconcerting or questionable, thus, to allow for criticism and openness to other possibilities.
- Modesty to accept that non-researchers may modernize the keys allowing one to unlock the door to an emergence of new understandings and new knowledge.

If researchers are unable to properly exercise these roles, the process can easily go off the rails. At one extreme, the partners may only serve as alibis in executing a research process that is completely controlled by the researchers. At the other extreme, the researchers may be censored by actors who have a legitimacy to control the definition of research objects.

The second danger is related to the clear responsibility of the non-scientist actors to acquire the rudiments of the university research culture when they agree to work in partnership. Although this acculturation process applies to both groups, it may be more difficult for non-scientist actors, who are more familiar with contractual relationships. At that point, the danger of instrumentalizing science through the research partnership relates to the actors making use of a partnering approach for highly specific projects that meet very precise needs. If delicate issues arise, they could ask that they not be handled. For other types of research, they would proceed in other ways: for example, with individual researchers on a contractual basis or with consulting firms in the case of studies where control over the information is important to them.

As a result, we feel that three major challenges are central to ensure the full development of the potential for research partnerships in the social economy.

The first is to ensure that the research partnerships model is disseminated and recognized. Our research consortium made up of ARUC-ÉS and the RQRP-ÉS represents a group of researchers whose work is often devalued because it does not meet the normative evaluation criteria of the scientific world. It is more prestigious to organize an international conference of the leading academics in a particular field than a conference of social actors. Similarly, the research world places more value on publications submitted to peer-reviewed journals than publications in popular magazines. This entails reviewing the very foundations of research funding so that new kinds of research networks and partnerships can be established. It also entails the need to allocate budget envelopes so that researchers pay more attention to the knowledge transfer dimension. Our vision today is confined to a linear logic in which the need for research gives rise to a research activity which generates results that are then published. The publication is considered as a consumer good. A new kind of vision, focusing on the circular nature of the process and the interaction among stakeholders at each step in the process, will ensure a real and more dynamic transfer of knowledge.

A second challenge is to enhance the dynamics of the partners' co-management of research and its dissemination when both researchers and practitioners are involved. On the one hand, there is a need for practitioners to become more qualitatively active in the problematization of research questions and in the methodological structuring of data production and the resulting analytical approach to data management. It is therefore important to transmit scientific culture to practitioners, that is, a culture founded on the relationship between empirical observation, critical analysis and theoretical models for conceptualizing the nature of things. On the other hand, it is necessary to clarify for researchers the culture of "action in crisis" that constitutes the everyday reality for social actors. Transmitting this culture of strategic intervention raises the question of the researcher's relationship with subjectivity: how far to go, what

boundaries to cross or not to cross, and above all, what kinds of safeguards to put in place to ensure that scientific rigour is always the guiding principle.

The third and final challenge is a cognitive one. It is difficult for scientific research to abstain from self-evaluation. Science also has its own work schedule along with a vaguely defined mission. The community of researchers belongs to a sector that must work towards both its own development and that of humanity. This project – making reality transparent by evidencing the truth, narrowing the gap between subjective truth and objective truth – is being pursued by research partnerships in the social economy. It is therefore important for this collaboration with other intellectuals to allow the research community to better affirm and present the role that it plays, and must play, and the place that it holds, and should hold, in society.

Endontes

1. See: http://www.fqrsc.gouv.qc.ca/fr/accueil.php

2. While taking into consideration the important nuances noted by Labrie and Gélineau (2011) where university-affiliated researchers, according to FQRSC, are considered a lower kind of researcher, they have a lower status according to the governmental agency than non-university-affiliated researchers.

3. For a comprehensive bibliography on university-community partnership, see the work of Tracy Soska: www.acosa.org/bib_soska.pdf. For an annotated bibliography with references (downloading information), see the document co-produced by Milwaukee Idea University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Center for Healthy Communities, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Medical College of Wisconsin http://www.uwm.edu/MilwaukeeIdea/publications/revised_amy_biblio.pdf

4. See http://communityresearchcanada.ca/?action=alliance

5. This paper is part of the international research project "Strengthening Knowledge Strategies for Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development: A Global Study on Community-University Partnerships." The Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) team, led by Jean-Marc Fontan, professor of sociology, was given the task of identifying indicators of success in research partnerships. While collaborative research partnerships have been in place for several years in many universities in Canada and around the world, little has been written on evaluating this research model.

6. Center for Community-Based Research, see: http://www.communitybasedresearch.ca/Page/View/CBR_definition.html

7. In his article, Desgagné uses the term collaborative research for what we call research partnerships.

8. For web info, see: http://paroledexclues.site11.com/; http://iupe.wordpress.com/

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Table 4.3: Les projets du Réseau québécois de recherche partenariale en économie sociale

Région Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Les interactions entre la gouvernance et le statut juridique des entreprises d'économie sociale : 4 cas en Abitibi-Témiscamingue
L'économie sociale et le vieillissement des populations dans les petites collectivités rurales.
La recherche en économie sociale, une valeur ajoutée à vos travaux étudiants
Cartographie des entreprises d'économie sociale de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue
État de la qualité de l'environnement éducatif des services de garde à la petite enfance en installation de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Région Bas-Saint-Laurent

Contribution de l'économie sociale au développement des milieux ruraux : le cas du Bas-Saint-Laurent
Apport de l'économie sociale à la culture : les enjeux du développement des entreprises d'économie sociale dans le domaine culturel

Région Capital National/Chaudière-Appalaches

Portrait et retombées de l'économie solidaire dans les régions de Québec et de Chaudière-Appalaches
Inventaire et retombées des systèmes d'échanges locaux
Inventaire, retombées et contribution des jardins collectifs à l'économie régionale dans les régions de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches
Le crédit communautaire dans la région de la Capitale Nationale
Les enjeux de l'économie sociale dans le domaine de la santé
Participation citoyenne et gouvernance dans les initiatives communautaires en santé mentale
La reprise et la transformation par l'économie sociale d'entreprises privées. Recension des écrits
Le crédit communautaire dans la région de la Capitale nationale : pratiques et impacts socio-économiques pour les personnes et pour les communautés (phase 2)
Étude de cas de la 'Coop La Mauve' (Coopérative en développement durable de Bellechasse) : facteurs de succès et incidences sur le développement local
Les initiatives d'économie sociale et solidaire chez les immigrants de la ville de Québec
Inventaire et retombés des systèmes d'échange de proximité québécois(phase 2)
Services de proximité et revitalisation des communautés dans Chaudière-Appalaches
Journée de l'agriculture urbaine

Région Estrie

Les conditions de succès dans l'émergence d'entreprises d'économie sociale dans les contextes rural et urbain
Les principaux mécanismes favorisant l'équilibre entre le management et la gouvernance démocratique au sein des entreprises d'économie sociale
Composantes de l'approche par les capacités en lien avec les interventions du Tremplin 16-30
Les élus et l'économie sociale
Les innovations territoriales
Stratégies et pratiques innovantes en économie sociale

Région de la Mauricie

Les projets innovants en économie sociale et leurs conditions de réussite : le cas de la franchise sociale
Un portrait de l'économie sociale en Mauricie
Contribution de la concertation pratiquée dans le cadre de « La Grande Séduction des Chenaux » à la dynamique de la vie communautaire et de l'économie sociale
Le tourisme social et solidaire
Contribution de la concertation pratiquée dans le cadre de « L'opération conquête » à la dynamique de la vie communautaire et de l'économie sociale
Création d'une coopérative de développement d'artisanat en milieu autochtone: impacts économiques et sociaux dans les communautés Atikamekws
L'avenir des ZECS comme forme d'organisation d'économie sociale

Région de Montréal

Étude exploratoire des politiques publiques qui soutiennent, encadrent ou facilitent l'essor de l'économie sociale dans des villes
Réalisation d'un portrait sur la situation des jeunes à Montréal en lien avec l'insertion en emploi
L'évolution des arrangements institutionnels structurant le développement des entreprises d'économie sociale en aide domestique à Montréal de 2003 à 2006
La perspective de la gestion des ressources humaines (GRH) dans les entreprises d'économie sociale de l'île de Montréal
Répertoire raisonné et évaluation des activités de médiation culturelle à Montréal
État de situation et perspectives sur les pratiques des agents d'économie sociale à Montréal
La dimension « environnementale » au sein des entreprises montréalaises d'économie sociale

Les mesures de conciliation entre la vie professionnelle et la vie personnelle et les conditions de travail dans les organisations communautaires et d'économie sociale
Le mouvement coopératif à Montréal
La contribution du développement économique communautaire à la cohésion sociale à Montréal
Recherche-action autour de l'expérimentation d'un modèle d'accompagnement en soutien à l'entrepreneuriat des femmes immigrantes et de groupes racisés (FIGR
Étude qualitative pour un portrait des communautés culturelles en économie sociale (volet Montréal)
Évaluation, consolidation et développement des pratiques d'intervention au sein de deux maisons de jeunes de Montréal

Région de l'Outaouais

Les territoires de la coopération : le cas de la Coopérative de développement régional Outaouais-Laurentides
S'intégrer dans une entreprise d'économie sociale : travailler autrement
Un nouveau mode de gouvernance de la forêt : l'expérience de la Corporation de gestion de la Forêt de l'Aigle
Changements des politiques forestières et reconfiguration des acteurs dans l'utilisation et la gestion de la forêt : le cas des projets de forêts habitées
Changements des politiques forestières et reconfiguration des acteurs dans l'utilisation et la gestion de la forêt : le cas des coopératives
Changement des politiques forestières et reconfiguration des acteurs dans l'utilisation et la gestion de la forêt : le cas des clubs et écoles de randonnée
Changement des politiques forestières et reconfiguration des acteurs dans l'utilisation et la gestion de la forêt : le cas des groupements forestiers
Transfert de stratégies de la Coopérative Quartiers en santé reliées aux saines habitudes de vie par l'action sur des déterminants sociaux auprès d'organismes à buts non lucratifs du secteur du Moulin / Notre Dame à Gatineau avec l'Acef, l'AGAP, l'Amicale des Handicapés, La CDROL, Le Centre de pédiatrie sociale, La Soupière, etc.).
Développement de groupes d'entraide (Hans) citoyenne au sein des coopératives de santé autour d'enjeux de prévention des risques chez les jeunes et de gestion de la chronicité par l'accompagnement éducationnel et comportemental

Région Saguenay/Lac-Saint-Jean

Les conditions d'émergence des entreprises d'économie sociale au Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean
Les effets de la reconfiguration du système de santé et services sociaux sur le partenariat entre le CSSS et les entreprises d'économie sociale en aide domestique
Les impacts sociaux et économiques du milieu communautaire au Saguenay
Portrait de l'économie sociale au Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean
Projet de rédaction de monographies sur les entreprises d'économie sociale au Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean
Colloque sur les enjeux de l'économie sociale au printemps 2008
Projet de colloque sur la reconnaissance du modèle d'affaire en ÉS

CHAPTER 5

Community University Research: The Southern Ontario Social Economy Research Alliance

Jennifer Hann, Laurie Mook, Jack Quarter and Ushnish Sengupta
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Community-university partnership research is an important research paradigm emanating from the roots of participatory research in the early 1970s (Hall, 1993). As with participatory research, it generally involves three main activities: research, education and action. It also seeks to democratize the knowledge process, and to situate the research process in the community, workplace or group affected by the knowledge generated (Hall, 1993; Stoecker & Bonacich, 1992). The Southern Ontario Social Economy Research Alliance (hereafter called the Alliance) of the Social Economy Suite, funded by a strategic grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), aimed to operate in this manner through its governance structure and through its many sub-projects.

The Social Economy Suite of grants came about after several consultations by the federal government with social economy actors. The guiding research questions posed under the call for proposals were derived from a participatory process that involved SSHRC, Le Chantier, CCEDNet, academic researchers and other interested parties. The research program called for "research on the social economy conducted by academic researchers in partnership with community-based organizations" (SSHRC, 2005, p. 1). SSHRC's characterization of the program might be referred to as what has come to be known as "community-engaged scholarship" (Stanton, 2007). Within this framework, it is expected that university participants will have particular strengths and that community partners will have other strengths, and that they will benefit mutually from working together. As such, the Social Economy Suite was more closely aligned with the funder's Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) program than its standard research grants.

The broad objective of the research program outlined by SSHRC was "to fund teams made up of university-based researchers and representatives of community-based organizations, operating as intellectual partners, to create regional nodes (networks) that will conduct research relevant to the social economy in Canada" (SSHRC, 2005, p. 1). Students and other interested parties also formed part of the team.

More specifically, the research program aimed to:

- contribute to defining policies, including an appropriate regulatory framework, applicable to the social economy;
- improve the performance of organizations and enterprises in areas that are important to the social economy in Canada;
- demonstrate through, for example: inventories, statistics, and comparative analyses, the actual and potential contribution of the social economy to the various sectors and regions of the Canadian economy; and,
- develop Canada's international contribution to, and visibility in, areas relevant to the social economy (SSHRC, 2005, p. 1).

Originally, the research program contained a provision for additional funding for joint initiatives to address research needs not covered by the Suite, but this was eliminated due to a change in government.

With a very short window and no letter of intent or funding to craft the grant proposal, decisions had to be made with less participation than would have been otherwise preferred. Regardless, the aim of the Alliance was to provide opportunities for meaningful social economy research that supported capacity building and evidence-based policy reform, using primarily a community-university research partnership model.

The governance group responsible for the overall direction of the Alliance consisted of both community and academic partners. Representatives included: the vice president of research of Imagine Canada, an umbrella organization for non-profits with a charitable registration in Canada; the executive director of the Ontario Co-operative Association, the umbrella group for co-operatives in Ontario; the principal investigator of the proposal from the University of Toronto; a PhD student and subsequent post-doc at the University of Toronto; and a faculty member from the Business and Society program at York University. At various times the group also included: the Alliance administrative assistant, the symposium coordinator, and the student representative from the Southern Ontario chapter of the Social Economy Student Network. The governance group met monthly from prior to the submission of the proposal until the end of year five, when the research program ended. (Dissemination work is still being undertaken until at least the end of 2011.)

A distinctive feature of the governance team was that time release was obtained for the community organizations to have representatives participate, not simply in a leadership role, but also in heading research. Interestingly, both of these were apex organizations (coalitions of other organizations) and differed in that regard from most of the community partners whose function was limited to their own organization's needs. Having apex organizations within the governance seemed suitable for that purpose.

Overall, the Alliance conducted 36 research projects in five areas: Mapping Southern Ontario's Social Economy; The Impact of Social Economy Organizations; Improving the Capacity of SEOs to Demonstrate their Value; Developing Policy; and Extending Theory (see Table 5.1). In addition, the administrative hub of the group, the Social Economy Centre, took the lead for the knowledge mobilization of the group as a whole, the results of which are discussed further on in this chapter.

Table 5.1: Southern Ontario Research Node[1]

Mapping Southern Ontario's Social Economy
Mapping of Social Economy Organisations I
Mapping of Social Economy Organisations II
Mapping of Social Purpose Businesses
Mapping of Unincorporated Non-profit & Voluntary Organizations
Mapping of Online Social Enterprises
Survey of Ontario's Mutual Insurance Companies
The Impact of Social Economy Organizations
The Social Economy in Organic Agriculture
To Investigate Fair and Ethical Trade and Local Public Procurement Policies in Canada
To Analyze the Efforts of the Planet Bean Coffee Co-operative to Develop A New Fair Trade Product (Cotton) with Local Partners in the Indian States of Tamil Nadu and Gujurat
Life Capital Social Economy Project
To Explore the Successes and Failures in the Greening of the Social Economy within Waterloo, Toronto, Peterborough, Hamilton and Elora
Social Innovation through Cross-Sector Models of Collaboration
To Explore the Synthesis between Urban Food Security and Rural Food Producers through such Social Economy Projects as Catering, Community Gardens, Collective Kitchens
An Exploration of the Potential Impact of the Co-operative Model on the lives of Minority Francophones Living in Southern Ontario
Service Learning in the Social Economy
Social Enterprise Research on Value Added (SERVA) Project
To Investigate Cree Concepts of Land and Environment and the Relevance of Social Economy Concepts

Improving the Capacity of SEOs to Demonstrate their Value
Financial Planning for Social Enterprises - Testing the 100% Business Cost Recovery Metric
To Develop and Operationalize a Social Accounting Model that can be Applied to Social Enterprises
To Create a Process and a Set of Indicators that, Initially, Measure the "Co-operative Difference" and, Subsequently, Measure other Social Factors
To Explore if Social and Environmental Accounting Tools Exist which could be Brought to Bear on Creating a Common Understanding of Stewardship
Co-operative Education: Dimensions of Rochdale V
High School Textbooks Project
New Social Economy Initiatives in Latin America
Developing Policy
To Analyze the Relationship between the Ontario Government and SEOs
To Study Employer-Supported Volunteerism
To Explore Ontario's Mandatory Community Service Program, its Impact in Introducing Students to the Social Economy and its Policy Implications
To Explore the Human Resource Practices and Policies in SEOs
Exploring the Impact of Organizational Ownership Structures on the Decision Making Process of Boards of Directors
Work Stoppages in Social Economy Organizations
A Comparison of Policy Frameworks for Social Enterprises and Non-profits in Ontario and Quebec
An Overview of the Different Policy Frameworks for the Support and Development of Co-operatives in Quebec and Ontario
An Overview of the Different Policy Frameworks and Organizational Support Systems for the Support and Development of Student Co-operatives in Quebec and Ontario
Extending Theory
To Synthesize the Social Economy Frameworks and Theories on Corporate Social Behaviour
The Role of Ideology and Gender Composition in Social Economy Organizations

The Alliance in southern Ontario may have been able to move forward more quickly than some of the other nodes because it was building upon a tradition of community-based research that had existed at OISE and within southern Ontario more generally. Some of the initiatives that might have created a foundation for the Alliance were: the participatory research tradition within the Adult Education department at OISE; the funding of projects through Imagine Canada as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative, circa 2000; the SSHRC NALL

CURA supervised by David Livingstone of OISE and subsequently the SSHRC Pensions at Work Research Alliance supervised by Jack Quarter. This tradition probably made it easier for the Alliance in southern Ontario to form quickly. In addition, the principals in the Social Economy Centre, where the Alliance was led, had an established working relationship with Imagine Canada and the Ontario Co-operative Association, the two key partner organizations. It is not clear that the nodes elsewhere in Canada had these established relations.

The Alliance had both an ongoing evaluation process and two additional evaluation surveys in year five of the program: one of the community and university partners and another of students. The ongoing evaluations consisted of a proposal that each sub-project lead submitted for review before receiving funding, and an annual evaluation in which each project lead had to complete a survey using Survey Monkey of its outputs and progress at the end of each year. In addition, an online survey of the 36 sub-projects, and an online survey of the graduate students' experiences were conducted. Overall, there were two goals of the evaluation research: (1) to analyze the research partnerships in terms of structure and process; and (2) to analyze the economic, social, environmental and political impacts for each stakeholder group. This chapter reports on the first goal, as well as the challenges and lessons learned.

In the remainder of this chapter, we create a framework to categorize different models of research involving community and academia. This framework is applied in a case study of the Southern Ontario Social Economy Research Alliance, where we also report on the challenges experienced by Alliance members in sustaining partnership research. This is followed by a discussion of the impact of the Alliance as a whole on the social economy sector, academia and students. Finally, we offer some final reflections on our five-year experience and report on how we used the lessons learned from this project to inform and design a subsequent CURA on social businesses.

Defining Community-University Partnership

In line with the theme of this e-book, our chapter seeks to examine the different models of conducting research that arose in the Southern Ontario Social Economy Research Alliance.

After reviewing literature on community-university research (for example, Chau et al., 2006; Hall, 1992, 1993; Savan & Flicker, 2006; Stanton, 2007; Stoecker, 1999), a matrix of possible research models was devised around two key characteristics: decision-making and impact. Both decision-making and impact ranged along a continuum from unilateral to mutual. The matrix was then divided into six cells to highlight differing degrees of decision-making and impact (Figure 5.1).

For community-university research we set out the following criteria for the "ideal" partnership:

Decision-making:

- The project involved ongoing and substantial contact with both partners throughout the duration of the project.
- Feedback from both partners shapes the direction of the research throughout the duration of the project.

Impact:

- The project was of benefit to both community actors/sector and academic actors/sector.
- Dissemination was geared to both academic and non-academic audiences.

At the other end of the continuum, we find the inverse characteristics.

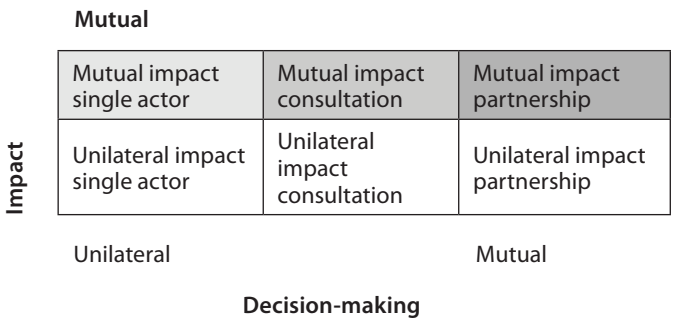
Decision-making:

- The project did not involve ongoing and substantial contact with both partners throughout the duration of the project.
- Feedback from both partners was not used to shape the direction of the research throughout the duration of the project.

Impact:

- The project was not of benefit to both community actors/sector and academic actors/sector
- Dissemination was not geared to both academic and non-academic audiences.

Figure 5.1: Variations of Research



Keeping these criteria in mind, we thus define the ideal of community-university partnership research as: *a participatory process of systematic inquiry by community and university actors in order to advance purposeful knowledge of mutual benefit to the research participants and to larger society.* This is reflected in the uppermost right cell of Figure 5.1. This definition is not meant to "romanticize the notion that moving towards maximum participation in all aspects of the research is optimal" (Flicker & Savan, 2006, p. 27). Rather it recognizes that there are varying levels of involvement of actors depending on context, and that a community-university research partnership is but one model of research involving university and community.

What remains for further study, and beyond the scope of this paper, is to analyze the relationships between different models of research and different impacts and relevance.

We used these criteria to evaluate the different research projects conducted through our Alliance. The impact criteria, "of benefit to both the community actors/sector and academic actors/sector" and "dissemination was geared to both academic and non-academic audiences," were met by all projects. Project proposals had to be approved initially by the governance group consisting of both community and academic actors, and the proposal guidelines called for both academic and non-academic dissemination.

In applying the decision-making criteria, however, it became evident that the task was not as straightforward as it might have seemed. For some projects, there were multiple community and university partners, and the contributions of each partner within the project varied across the continuum. Contact between partners might have been strong in the beginning, but waned over time. This could have been due to staff turnover or to pressures faced by community organizations to devote their time to deal with urgent operational matters. The degree of involvement at each major decision point is still to be analyzed, but we were able to determine which projects with both community and academic partners maintained ongoing contact and which did not. Those that maintained contact and worked continuously together on their research, we categorized as having a partnership relationship. Those that did not maintain contact throughout, and only came together to provide support, periodic advice or research access, were categorized as consultative relationships.

The breakdown of the sub-projects of the Alliance is shown below in Table 5.2. Of the 36 sub-projects in the Southern Ontario Node, 26 reported having both community and academic partners (17 as partnerships and 9 as consultative), while 10 reported as being single-actor projects.

Figure 5.2: Alliance Sub-projects

			Leadership		
		Total	Academic Lead	Community Lead	Student Lead
Decision-Making	Partnership	17	13	2	2
	Consultative	9	6	1	2
	Single Actor	10	7	1	2
	Total	36	26	4	6

For projects with both academic and community partners, we looked at the degree of involvement of each partner in order to determine if it fit the criteria set out above for a community-university research partnership. Survey responses from the final reports submitted by each project and from the evaluation surveys were analyzed. From these responses, we determined if the partners maintained ongoing contact, and if the contact was consultative at selective points only, or collaborative throughout critical stages in development of the project. To be categorized as a partnership, the relationship had to extend beyond a nominal advisory role for the community or academic partners, and not be limited to involvement in the preliminary stages of the research, for example, as in the provision of contact information or other data of interest to the academic partners. In the latter case, the research relationship was determined to be more consultative than a partnership.

We also looked at who was leading each project. The norm for the sub-projects was that there was a lead or "principal agent," typically a faculty member but in some cases a community partner or graduate student. Within management studies, there is an extensive body of research on how within an organization with multiple stakeholders, a principal agent dominates. Berle and Means (1932) frame this as a conflict between management and owners, and Jordan (1989) discusses its applicability to multi-stakeholder co-operatives.

The contexts that Berle and Means and Jordan refer to differ from those of the sub-projects within this Alliance; however, the same principle applies: when differing stakeholders function within an organization, one tends to dominate. With respect to our research, academics tended to dominate because, as indicated in our evaluation, they were experienced researchers who had the know-how. Partner organization representatives lacked the research experience. However, the two partner organizations for which the project funded release time took leadership roles for the Alliance and for sub-projects.

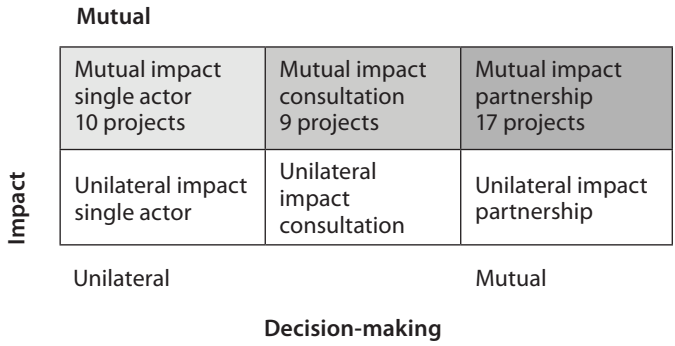
Situating the projects in the framework presented in Figure 5.1, the results of this analysis indicated that 17 of the 36 projects were approaching the

partnership model, 9 seemed to have more of a consultative nature, and 10 were undertaken unilaterally by either community or academic actors (Figure 5.2).

Challenges in Sustaining Collaborative Research

As with any partnership or collaborative process, managing the expectations of stakeholders is of great importance. For instance, the needs of community partner organizations are practical and might differ in fundamental ways from those of university faculty and graduate students who are expected to produce scholarly work that will be published in academic presses, scholarly journals and conferences, all with peer review processes. We now turn to some of the challenges expressed by Alliance members in managing expectations and in participating in the research process in general. These challenges related to the experience in research, external influences and different cultures of the different participants.

Figure 5.3: Project Classification: Southern Ontario Social Economy Research Alliance



Experience in Research

The partnerships for the sub-projects were established by the project leads, predominantly faculty members who had a track record of research in the social economy. The community partners who participated ranged from organizations that had an established research capacity to those that had none, with some organizations having some capacity, but for simple applied projects. Only one of the community partners in the Alliance could be viewed as having an established research capacity, and perhaps another six undertook some research, but it was a relatively minor part of their activities. Most of the organizations existed for another purpose – a community service, advocacy, representing a network, etc. Research experience was limited. Therefore, it was not surprising that academic leads became the principal agent for many projects. Even where there was a community-university research partnership, the university member was most

often the lead. However, the work undertaken was of direct interest to the community partner – for example, introducing a social accounting system into a community organization or revising a social accounting tool for another – and therefore the partner stayed involved.

One researcher highlighted the need to provide "ongoing training/workshops for all partners on how to do this type of research." Community partners, she argued, could benefit from "access to university library resources, including online journals." Another community partner said that "if you bring capacity building to the organization as part of the Alliance, it will help the Alliance along by enhancing our ability to participate in it."

The expectations of community partners tended to relate to their level of involvement in the sub-projects. One partner noted that "we weren't active participants, but more of a supporter." Another described the ongoing collaborative nature of the partnership with the academic leads, noting that the organization was "really happy to have the professors with us — they are real experts!" One community partner told us that the research alliance was intended to "match up the research needs of sector with academics," allowing the community partners to engage in "research we couldn't do otherwise."

Some of the relationships among team members changed over time due to the shifting interests of the participants. One project lead stated that "any team with eight to ten people will change in terms of involvement of particular members. There was a core of about five of us that became more involved as the project matured. This had to do with the theoretical interests of different people. Not everyone was engaged by each facet." Another project lead reported that over time, the team members "became disengaged, and felt enough had been said."

External Influences

The universities that were part of the Alliance had stable funding compared to community partner organizations. Only one faculty member in the Alliance changed jobs, and that was a sideways move to another university that did not affect the sub-project. Similarly, graduate assistants, although a less stable group because they complete their program and move on, had stable funding throughout the five years of the Alliance. However, the same could not be said for the community partners. Their funding environment is complex and can be precarious. Many have a very small staff who function on short-term contracts. For those relying upon government funding, the environment became even more complex in 2006, just after the Alliance began, when the Conservatives became the federal government. One of their first acts was to cancel the funding designated for the social economy. This and other initiatives affected the stability of organizations in the Alliance, not simply the smaller organizations but also the larger community partners.

To use a couple of examples, one mid-sized environmental group lost its government funding, and while the study was ongoing it had to convert itself to a social enterprise that relied more heavily on the sale of services. As a result, that sub-project changed its focus. Another organization, probably the largest in the Alliance, lost most of its research funding from the federal government, and its research staff, at one point in the 20s, dwindled to a few people, and eventually its research lead and participant in the Alliance parted ways with the organization.

In the evaluation, many community partners indicated that addressing some of their budgetary and time constraints could allow them to devote more time to the Alliance's activities. As one community partner told us: "It would be easier for community partners to take the lead if they received some funding."

The compensation of community partner organizations is a fundamental issue. As noted above, only two partner organizations in the Alliance were compensated for time release. Four community organizations were the lead on research projects, but the compensation for this was in part covered by time release for the leadership group. For those that didn't have this coverage, the funds were allocated towards hiring a graduate student who would work with them on the research. The remainder of the funds were allocated to project supplies, travel and dissemination. Faculty researchers did not receive compensation through the grant; however, they were paid salaries through their institutions.

Different Cultures

The organizational culture of universities and partner organizations differs. Tenured university faculty have job security and are used to autonomy and working at a self-defined pace, with scholarly research being a priority. The staff of partner organizations often lacks the security of universities, and have many demands including reporting to funders. Therefore, it is challenging for these cultures to mesh.

Several academic and community partners noted that timing issues and timelines posed significant challenges to the partnership and often impacted the course of the research. As one researcher stated, "It has been a push to get it finished. Another challenge from a research point of view has been timing. We had to modify our research question in a few respects because the timing was off with respect to the availability of information and policy development." Another project lead told us that the project's partnership consisted of a faculty member along with "a researcher who worked full-time in a non-profit organization. The main challenge was for him to take time away from his full-time job for research." One community partner stated: "The main challenge for me was finding time to participate. For non-profits, the constant challenge

is to bring in the funding to do our work, so finding time to participate in the research was the greatest challenge by far." However, the partner noted that she was able to "carve out time" for the project by making regular appointments with the academic partner and frequently reviewing the progress of the research. An academic lead described her partnership as "a very good collaborative experience." From the beginning of the project, she was aware that "the organizations worked differently from our timelines." The academic partner overcame this challenge by acknowledging this discrepancy and simply "giving priority to their timelines." Most academic-community partnerships will face similar issues related to timing and time commitments, as well as divergent deadlines and budgetary cycles.

One community partner emphasized the need to "build stronger relationships, clarify the expectations of both sides, and understand that we come from different worlds. Researchers may need to explain things like the process of the ethics review, and we need to help you to understand the day-to-day reality of our organizations." Similarly, another community partner argued that "both sides must communicate effectively and learn from each other. There is a big difference in language, and this isn't always navigated as well as it should be." Another community partner told us that it was "important to take the time to understand what each party wants to get from the research. Map out the strengths and resources the participants bring to the project so you can capitalize on them and support one another. Be truly collaborative in terms of design and execution. And keep the lines of communication open throughout. If you are truly collaborative, it might be a longer process than you imagine."

The importance of collaboration was referred to often in the interviews: "The research parameters need to be designed in conjunction with the community agency. Community organizations may have practical ideas about what is useful, and can help design a study so that it has useful outcomes for them. The research is not the only thing the community organization is working on. When you take this into account in terms of the timing of the research, there will be greater satisfaction on both sides down the road."

In the evaluation, none of the participants indicated that interpersonal conflicts among team members (or between academic and community partners) significantly interfered with or derailed their research. However, lack of clarity regarding expectations, timelines, and guidelines for collaboration was often, to varying degrees, a source of tension. While many of the participants noted that they enjoyed having the autonomy to develop and design their own sub-projects, some project leads indicated that this level of independence could lead to ambiguity regarding their roles and responsibilities, both as members of the research team and as members of the alliance.

Impact for Academia and the Social Economy Sector

A major stakeholder, SSHRC, invested $1.75 million over five years in the Alliance, with a one-year extension granted. The dissemination component is still underway, but there are some clear indications of the Alliance's output at this point – for example: one authored book, and three edited collections have been published by participants in the Alliance (three of the books by a university press). Two other edited collections are under review by a university press. Members of the Alliance have published or had accepted for publication over 50 refereed research papers and book chapters and have presented 165 papers to refereed conferences based upon their Alliance research. Other dissemination products include workshops, reports, public talks, and articles in public media. These numbers will continue to grow over the next few years and are archived on the Social Economy Centre website.

For all of the sub-projects, the research clearly reflected the needs and interests of the community partners or the sector as a whole. The research often had a practical element or application for the organizations involved. For example, some projects developed specific measurement tools for their community organizations. Another example is a census of all co-operatives and credit unions in Ontario and an analysis of student co-operatives in Québec undertaken by OnCo-op; a mapping of the social economy in Ontario undertaken by Imagine Canada and OnCo-op; the revision of a social accounting tool used by the Toronto Enterprise Fund. Given the collaborative expectations of the research, each of the 36 projects either have produced or are producing short fact sheets and backgrounders that are specifically designed for the community partner organizations. These fact sheets translate the research into simple language and are posted on the Social Economy Centre website.[2]

The research also met the needs and interests of the academic partners, who were concerned with advancing knowledge and publishing. The idea of a professional research association based upon the social economy and a Canadian journal for this field also originated and received its initial impetus from participants in the Alliance, and have been realized in the Association of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research (ANSER), now in its fourth year, and the Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research, about to publish its first issue. The Alliance executive also initiated the process that led to the formation of the Ontario Social Economy Roundtable or OSER, a network of community partner organizations that was founded in 2008 with the intention of bringing together the major players in Ontario's social economy. The creation of OSER reflected an important outcome of this CURA in that it brought together key organizations for non-profits and co-operatives, organizations that normally function separately.

The Alliance also funded the development of education materials on the social economy for business schools and invested in updating materials on co-operatives as part of a broader education initiative by OnCo-op – the Rochdale Education Project; the intent being to increase the presence of curriculum about co-operatives in secondary schools.

The Social Economy Centre (SEC) established a monthly workshop series for community organizations that can lead to a certificate, and has proven so popular that a second certificate in human resource management has been developed. Some of the sub-projects held educational workshops including one from the University of Ottawa on food security. The SEC also runs a monthly speakers' series, predominantly by members of community organizations, that is webcast and archived. The speakers' series disseminates innovative practices. The innovative online social accounting system, Volunteers Count, was developed through the Alliance by Laurie Mook with support from the Education Commons at OISE, and this practical tool is being used by community organizations to keep track of volunteer contributions and to include them in social accounting reports.[3]

These latter outputs are contributions to the broader community, not simply the participants in the Alliance. The same was true of the five annual conferences that drew from a broader community.

Impact for Students

One of the objectives stated in the CURA proposal submitted for funding was to "build a future generation of researchers, create a presence for the social economy in higher education institutions and focus heavily on knowledge dissemination. Training of students is a key feature of this Alliance, and for each project graduate students will form part of the team." Some students exceeded these expectations, becoming project leads and conducting their own research.

While there was variation in the funding for sub-projects, the norm was $30,000 per year over two years. (Some projects spread the funding over more than two years.) Of this amount, it was expected that at least two-thirds of the allocation was for graduate student training.

By the time that the survey of graduate assistants was undertaken, most had graduated from their university. The 20 students who responded were still engaged in the research when the survey was undertaken and tended to be actively involved in the Alliance. Some of the key findings from their responses were:

- 91 percent expressed satisfaction with their experience;
- 91 percent increased confidence in their research capabilities;
- 56 percent accessed data for their thesis;

- 73 percent felt their experience increased the likelihood for completing their thesis work;
- 73 percent increased quality of their thesis work;
- 91 percent increased their ability to conduct independent research;
- 91 percent increased confidence in their research capacities;
- 82 percent increased capacity to work in teams;
- 82 percent increased enhanced project management skills;
- 82 percent increased communication skills;
- 55 percent developed contacts with potential employers:
- 91 percent developed useful references for their resume;
- 82 percent increased knowledge of what an academic career entails.

Although more follow-up is needed on the graduate student experience, the preliminary indications are that the Alliance lived up to, and may have surpassed, its commitments to the funding agency.

Additional Reflections and Recommendations

The Social Economy Suite funding falls within what SSHRC now labels as partnership research, and in particular, partnership between universities and "community sector partners." The SSHRC website currently describes this relationship as: "designed to foster innovative research, training and the co-creation of new knowledge on critical issues of intellectual, social, economic and cultural significance through a process of ongoing collaboration and mutual learning." (SSHRC, 2010b)

The evaluation of the Southern Ontario Research Alliance suggests that the majority of sub-projects could be classified as community-university partnerships involved in the "co-creation of new knowledge." Other research groups were guided generally by co-constructed research, but operated more as a consultancy. Still others operated in more the traditional research style; however, they still produced knowledge of use to the social economy and to academia. Overall, the Alliance succeeded in producing a comprehensive body of research and disseminating it in differing ways that could be of use to both university and non-university stakeholders. It also surpassed its mandate to train students and create a new generation of social economy researchers. In terms of sustainability, the creation of a new association, the Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research, provides a structure to create and sustain relationships between researchers, community groups, students and policy makers, as well as advance knowledge in this area. The website also provides an important archive and resources for community and academia alike.

One of the challenges in the co-production of research is that norms for university scholarship are not necessarily compatible with the needs of a partner organization. Finding a balance that meets the needs of all stakeholders is challenging. It is tempting to suggest that supporting community partner-led projects is the solution because it allows partner organizations to pursue research directly related to the needs and interests of their organizations, with the added advantage of bringing the practitioner's perspective to the forefront of the research. However, issues of resource constraints, both finances and time; the capacity to do research; and the relevance of research to the day-to-day operations of social economy organizations, needs to be addressed.

Moving Forward

The lessons learned from the Alliance have helped fashion the newest CURA operating out of the Social Economy Centre, "Social Business and Marginalized Social Groups." In this case, a small grant received as a result of a successful letter of intent allowed more collaboration in the formation of the research proposal to SSHRC.

In terms of capacity to do community-university partnership research, prior to the release of funds to the individual projects, all of the research teams (comprised of the community partners, academic partners, and graduate students) were invited to an all-day workshop to discuss the overall objectives of the CURA and to prepare for the case studies. Bearing in mind the lessons of the Alliance, an effort was made to clarify the expectations of all participants in the project.

The case studies are all university-led; however, the governance group consisting of both community and university representatives have mutually designed the overall research program. Moreover, release time is budgeted for the community partners to the CURA to participate. Every effort is being made to keep the partner organizations engaged, but it will take time to know whether this continues.

Endnotes

1. Two research projects ("To explore the value that urban communities add to public dollars" and "To examine the effectiveness of specific behaviours, primarily web-based, for facilitating the development of social networks") were withdrawn in their early stages from the Alliance. The projects highlighted in bold were later additions to the Alliance.

2. See: http://sec.oise.utoronto.ca/english/index.php

3. See: http://www.volunteerscount.net

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CHAPTER 6

Respectful Research Relations: Learnings from Communities[1]

Gayle Broad
Northern Ontario Node and Algoma University

As a community developer for almost twenty-five years before I entered academic life, I was fascinated to discover that the self-organizing of communities could be construed as "research," specifically participatory action research (Maguire, 1987). With this background, it has not been surprising to find that my academic research has been focused on the various streams of action research, and the community-university research relationship has held considerable interest for me. The social economy research provided a space for me to fully engage these skills and interests as I acted as the academic co-lead[2] for the Northern Ontario research projects and for inquiries related to social enterprises. This chapter is based on my reflections on these efforts, and was further informed by a focus group discussion with the researchers engaged in some of these projects: Sheila Gruner, Anne O'Connor, Linda Savory-Gordon and José Reyes.

Literature Review

Communities are embedded within their individual histories, cultures and contexts, and respond to change by self-organizing themselves to meet their social, economic and ecological needs (Walker & Salt, 2006). The social economy is a visible site of this self-organization, and thus, organizations within the social economy are highly diverse and often "emergent, informal and highly localized" (Hall, 2010) as they adapt themselves to a constantly evolving environment. Both the diversity of the social economy and this adaptive cyclical process pose challenges for communities and universities in the development of research partnerships, and raise the question of how respectful relations between communities and universities may be established and maintained.

The Tri-Council policy on Research Ethics has made a number of recommendations in response to concerns expressed by communities regarding the conduct of research in a manner which respects the community's ownership and control of research findings, and the co-generation of knowledge in community-university research partnerships.[3] The policy provides some key guidelines for ethical work with a set specifically for working in Indigenous

communities,[4] but researchers and institutions must still struggle with the application of the policy in any particular research project. Community consent, for example, is just one of the many thorny issues which confront such researchers. How does a researcher decide that consent of a community has been given? Can a chief and band council members or an executive board approve a piece of research on behalf of their communities?

Communities and universities have been attempting to answer these questions and meet the challenges inherent in these partnerships in a wide variety of ways, as is evident in the Canada-wide research on the social economy undertaken over the past five years. Hammond Ketilson (2005, p. 3) suggests that in the conduct of social economy research there can be

> … no single template for productive [community university] research partnerships. Each requires new approaches to collaboration, new ways of honouring identities and building relationships, new ways of inhabiting institutional and other spaces …

Community-Based Research (CBR) may, however, provide a methodological frame for community-university research partnerships in the social economy, which can support and respect both the diversity of the sector as well as its evolving nature:

> Community-based research is acollaboration between community groups and researchers for the purpose of creating new knowledge or understanding about a practical community issue in order to bring about change. The issue is generated by the community and community members participate in all aspects of the research process. Community-based research therefore is collaborative, participatory, empowering, systematic and transformative. (Hills & Mullett, 2000, p. 1)

Schmidt (2009), in her reflections on a five-year community-university collaboration with First Nation communities, identifies a number of factors that support the development of such partnerships, and suggests that researchers in such collaborations need to be cognizant of, and respond to, a number of community requirements. Her recommendations include: immersing oneself in the community to better understand the daily realities of community members; undertaking an extended period of relationship-building, which continues until the community decides it is ready to engage with the researcher in a research project; and maintaining and sustaining long-term and ongoing relationships with the community itself and community members. Schmidt emphasizes that researchers need to become entwined in social relations with community members, as it is through these relationships that power differentials between

communities and academics may be decreased, and trust established between academics and communities. Schmidt's findings echo those of Heron (1996) and other action researchers who emphasize the importance of relationships of trust in creating community-university partnerships.

Broad and Reyes (2008) reflecting upon one of the social economy CBR partnerships explored in this chapter, and in which both played central roles, suggest that the five years of communication and relationship development which led to the establishment of the partnership built a firm foundation upon which to engage in collaborative research. They also identified that sharing a set of common values and experiences were key to its success. These principles include: acknowledging the community's right to determine its own development in all aspects of the research; respecting the collective ownership of community knowledge; ensuring that the control of the research and benefits generated by it remain with the community; and valuing and accrediting communities' knowledges and processes.

In sum, the literature on community university partnerships raises as many questions as it answers. Five of these research partnerships, all involving Algoma University, are drawn upon here in an attempt to further our understandings.

Brief Overview of Five Community-Based Research Projects

During the five years of the social economy research (2006-2011), Northern Ontario communities were experiencing significant changes in response to globalization and its impacts on resource-dependent communities. Social economy actors were organizing to adapt to major shifts in the economy, the environment and the social fabric of communities while also seizing opportunities for increasing regional sustainability and autonomy. These rapid and major changes presented communities with a host of new problems and opportunities, creating an abundance of research questions. The following summaries of five CBR projects demonstrate the diversity of the sector, as well as the "emergent, informal, and highly-localized" (Hall, 2010) nature of it.

Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT)[5]

This organization began in 2006 with a townhall meeting organized to address the reduction in passenger rail service between Sault Ste. Marie and Hearst, a small regional railway line. The coalition's goal is to maintain and expand passenger rail service in Northeastern Ontario, and it is composed of tourist operators; business people; railway employees; and passengers including cottagers, municipal groups, First Nations and others. CAPT has taken a holistic approach to developing community-wide support for improved passenger rail service, and conducting research on its social, environmental and economic

benefits. Of equal importance to its holistic approach has been: its sponsorship of a wide range of events focused on the historical and cultural significance of the rail line, the development of a number of eco-tourism events such as a winter snow train aimed at school children, a now-annual event on the Group of Seven, and a policy summit which brought together all levels of government to explore the value of rail service to the region. The Coalition has also worked to make the service more accessible in response to needs expressed by members who experienced disabilities; its Steering Committee is representative of its diversity, and it is building cross-cultural understandings between small municipalities and First Nations.

Key to the organization's success has been the multiple overlapping relationships between coalition members, passengers, researchers and policy makers; for example, the lead researcher, Linda Savory-Gordon, is a cottage owner along the line and also a regular passenger, and a co-chair of the coalition is also chair of a tourist association in the region. Savory-Gordon (2011) suggests that she has difficulty distinguishing her role because she thinks of the research as "my volunteer work" and exhibits her "embeddness" in the project by stating that "I am planning my retirement around CAPT's activities." Another outstanding feature has been the holistic approach to research; for example, understanding that rail ridership extends beyond making economic and environmental sense, to a deeper commitment to the historical and cultural significance of the railway. In Northern Ontario, the railway provided the first point of connection for many communities; highways were non-existent in many areas until the late 1950s, and the rail line runs through many First Nations territories, though there were no stops or benefits to them. Thus the coalition organizes events such as the "Group of Seven" train event[6] which links support for passenger rail to the history of the region, and the needs and potential benefits to First Nations communities have been high on the group's priorities. CAPT has also used a socially inclusive process to attract participation from First Nations, people with disabilities, youth, etc.

One of the challenges for CAPT in its early stages was establishing itself as a credible organization, particularly as it faced some opposition from more established community players who felt the new coalition was likely to upset some major economic players in the community. Savory-Gordon identified a highly respected expert in the field to provide oversight to her research in the creation of an Opportunity Study (Mallone Given Parsons Ltd., 2007). This strategy resulted in the group being taken far more seriously, and the group has continued to build its credibility through its ongoing events and strategic alliances.

As CAPT gained momentum, however, its success threatened a local politician sufficiently that a telephone call was placed to a senior administrator at the university, challenging the right of the researcher to use the university's

logo on materials promoting Coalition events. NORDIK's[7] Director of Research (Gayle Broad, author of this paper) pointed out through a letter that advocacy for policy change is part of the very definition of community-based research and that elimination of the logo would be a denial of the community's relationship with the university, as well as an infringement on academic freedom. The objections were subsequently ignored and CAPT proceeded.

Penokean Hills Farms[8]

Penokean Hills Farm is a cooperative marketing venture of a group of 8 beef farmers in the Algoma region formed to obtain access to local markets when the US border closed to them following the "mad cow" crisis. Their mission/goal statement includes ensuring maintenance of family farming as a way of life, as well as environmental goals and healthy meat production. CBR has assisted the farmers from their inception, conducting marketing and business planning research including identifying a niche market and helping with funding applications. One of the key factors in this partnership has been the recognition of the expert knowledge of the farmers both in beef production and in government regulations related to food production and sales. One example of this occurred early on in the research. At the presentation of the first piece of market research (Fernandez, Mayhew, & Tarantini, 2006) it was clear that selling beef into the local market would not be an easy transition for the farmers, and they would be required to make substantial changes in their production methods in order to cater to the identified consumer niche market. The consumers were willing to pay a higher price for beef, but in exchange, they wanted to be assured that farmers were, if not organic, at least able to verify that the animal had been raised on a local farm and had minimal levels of inoculations. Calves would have to be born throughout the year, rather than in the winter/spring calving season, in order to come to market at differing times. The farmers spent two years processing this information and reorganizing their production schedule, as well as taking training in the documentation process, before they were able to begin the venture. For the researchers observing this major shift in farmers' lifestyles engendered a great deal of respect for their knowledge and commitment to the process. One of the interns working on the business plan for the processing plant was fearful that he might make mistakes in projecting revenues and expenses, and expressed his concern that if he made mistakes it could cost the farmers their livelihoods (Lawrence, 2010). Bringing in an expert in small business management to guide the process reassured the researcher, but Lawrence's respect for the farmers' willingness to risk their futures in the venture, and his fears regarding his own capacity to meet their research needs, demonstrated his respect for them and their knowledge.

The farmers who comprise Penokean Hills Farms have been integrally involved in all aspects of the CBR from the beginning. They identified the research questions (i.e., what is the nature and extent of the market for locally produced beef) and have participated in hiring the research interns who have worked with them on the projects. The interns attended the meetings of the board and made monthly reports to them, as well as participating in the weekly research meetings of NORDIK. For the cooperative, the marketing activities were only one of many collaborative efforts by the farmers' who had worked together to purchase a processing plant in the region in 2002 and who regularly organized the annual cattle sale. My lifelong involvement with many of the farmers through being raised in the same rural area also contributed to a shared understanding of what farming means to the families who have chosen this way of life in a rather inhospitable geographic region.

The Paquataskamik Project

The Paquataskamik Project[9] is part of a multi-faceted project in Fort Albany First Nation aimed at creating an intergenerational dialogue on relationships within traditional territory (Project CL1-10-NO, see Table 6.1). The Albany River watershed has played a key role in the economic, political, social and cultural lives of the Mushkegowuk peoples but today their lives are rapidly changing in response to pressures from both outside, as well as inside, the community. This project is creating dialogue about the community's relationship to the land through intergenerational activities such as a 10-day raft trip down the Albany River with 14 community members ranging in age from 14 to 90. "Participants in the river excursion interviewed elders and each other about the sites and stories along the river. Cree names were re-introduced onto a map that took on a whole new character in contrast to English language maps" (Gruner & Metatawabin, 2009, p. 1).The raft became a "Floating Mushkegowuk University" (Broad & Gruner, 2010, p. 7) with Elders at the centre of the cultural teachings and community-based research methods instruction provided both in the community and on the raft.

The raft trip was only one component – though an important and exciting one – of a long-term community process to build community consensus around evolving relationships with the land. Gruner has been privy to some of this dialogue for several years now, first as a literacy worker within the community, but also as friend and colleague, community facilitator and later as a researcher/academic. She believes that the community involvement prior to becoming involved with an academic institution ensured that "… the community was able to chart its own course – determine its own goals" (Gruner, 2011) independent of institutional priorities. During the community planning for the raft trip, she realized that she could combine her work as an instructor in the Community Economic and Social Development (CESD) programme at

Algoma University, with the community's desire to gain formal recognition for the learning associated with the undertaking. Gruner recognized that the raft trip could also provide a unique opportunity to accord traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) a place within the academy with the sharing of the Elders' knowledge, and an off-campus delivery of a university level course resulted. The already established practice at Algoma University of delivering off-campus intensive courses, and the institution's mandate to provide education to indigenous students, supported this achievement.

Ken McDougall: The Enjoyment of Form

Ken McDougall: The Enjoyment of Form is a case study which celebrated, through the creation of a video, the contribution of a local artist, Ken McDougall, to the cultural vibrancy of Northern Ontario (CL5-24-NO, see Table 6.1). The research provides a retrospective of the influence and support provided by the region's geography, culture and history (as well as other artists) to McDougall's development and creativity. An experienced community developer, Anne O'Connor, brought together three young people who were all new at their roles: a researcher, a film-maker, and a public relations/promotions person. This group formed the heart of a community based project which resulted in over 32 showings of the film, an award from a regional film festival, and recognition for an artist of some distinction.

O'Connor (2011) indicated that she had originally conceived of this project as a way of preserving the history of McDougall's works and influence following the recent deaths of two other local artist, Ren Bertolo and Ken Danby, both friends and colleagues of McDougall's. She wanted to record McDougall's "last major show" as he was calling it, and aimed to create a 10-minute video of the paintings hanging on the walls of the Art Gallery of Algoma with a brief narration of the paintings' background. Once she brought the young film-maker and artist together, however, they developed a new, enlarged concept, and O'Connor's role changed from that of concept and design to organizing production. A 48-minute film resulted; it included: documenting the influences on the artist, comments by friends and colleagues, and one dramatic piece of footage where several pieces of art were hung on trees (Nystedt & O'Connor, 2008). O'Connor's willingness and capacity to adapt to her new role as an organizer of funding, production schedules, staff parties, and the multiple public showings of the film, was crucial to the overall success of the project. She herself identified her overall role in the production of the film as "the holder of the focus" (O'Connor, 2011).

O'Connor (2011) observed that understanding the success of the project lies in the inter-generational nature of it. While young people were the "legs" of the project, it was her own generation who made it possible. O'Connor reflected that

support from many organizations was made available to the project because her generation of social actors were in decision-making positions. "I didn't look for money … Gayle just called me up one day and said she had some funding … I asked the Art Gallery [of Algoma] for help and they gave it to me, I asked Sault College and they gave it to me, I asked Tenaris for help and they gave it to me" (O'Connor, 2011). O'Connor's extensive contacts throughout the community were also crucial, as this resulted in broad-based interest and numerous showings, as well as meeting the financial needs of the production.

O'Connor reflected that her experience as a volunteer in the production ensured her independence from any institutional dynamic, and that the substantial number of organizations supporting the initiative decreased the significance of any particular funder or supporter. She suggests that the university's role in CBR should be one of "creating the space" for development and organizing efforts, and points out that her relationship was not with the institution itself, but rather with an individual whom she had known for many years.

Recovery of the Collective Memory and Projection of the Future

Recovery of the Collective Memory and Projection of the Future is a participatory action research project undertaken with ASOPRICOR, a community group in Colombia, which supports holistic development in rural and small urban communities (Project CL1-03-NO, Table 6.1). Over the past 25 years, this community based organization has assisted 600 families across the region in developing cooperative stores, women's and youth organizations, schools, organic agriculture, coop housing, and many other social and cooperative enterprises.The research the group has undertaken has been to explore and record their history, and formulate a plan of action for the future, with the goal of co-creating this knowledge with a new generation of social actors.

José Reyes, the research facilitator, was a founding member of ASOPRICOR and had come to Algoma University in 2005 to enrol in the CESD Certificate programme. I had first met Reyes and other members of ASOPRICOR in 2001 when I had travelled to Colombia with a group of 30 Canadians participating in the *Minga,* an effort to build solidarity between civil societies in the two countries. We stayed in contact after he immigrated to Canada, and he had immediately identified the similarities in both principles and practices of ASOPRICOR and the CESD programme in their efforts to achieve social transformation. In particular, Reyes identified four areas of shared values between the two organizations: a holistic approach to community development; an understanding that community and research *processes* are as important as outcomes; the connection between local and global action; and a commitment to socially transformative education and research. The research would not have occurred without his crucial role in building the relationship between the two

organizations, facilitating discussions across language and cultural barriers.

ASOPRICOR's community processes were reflective of a long history of bringing people together within a highly conflicted region: throughout the 1990s and early 2000s the region had experienced violence, including the massacre of 13 people, and people in the region were constantly under threat by several groups of armed actors. ASOPRICOR's members were clearly highly-skilled community organizers who required that research partners respect their knowledge of what was or was not possible or appropriate in an ever-changing community context. An earlier unsatisfactory experience had made the members wary of university research partnerships, so safeguards ensuring respect for the community's autonomy were negotiated into the partnership agreement, involving several iterations and requiring approximately three months to finalize.

ASOPRICOR invited all of its participant organizations to self-select which ones would like to participate in the research project, and the seven organizations then chose individuals to facilitate the research in their local areas and act as a secretariat to the project. The CBR training was open to the entire community. As the histories of the social economy activities were constructed, draft reports were circulated again and again to community members until they felt that it truly represented their experiences.

ASOPRICOR's commitment to its inclusive community processes resulted in research that truly documented the history of the organization and its members, and has proven useful in garnering support from local municipalities and from provincial and national authorities. In reflecting on the role of the university, Reyes (2011) asserts that the university does not "legitimize" the work of the community – the community does that itself. But the university has lent its credibility as an expert in research, and this has contributed to the interest in the research outcomes and products shown by various levels of government as well as by a number of Colombian universities. Additionally, because the university recognizes the work of the community, the community itself and its members have a greater awareness and respect for their own work. ASOPRICOR hopes to develop a programme based on CESD (with adaptations for the Colombian context) to meet its members' needs and desire for post-secondary education that will prepare a new generation of leaders in social transformation in its region.

Common Elements of Community-University Partnerships

As the academic lead for the Northern Ontario research, I have had the privilege of working to a greater or lesser extent with each of these projects, and of having many conversations, both formal and informal, with the research leads and facilitators as they (and sometimes I) engage with the communities. I am also deeply indebted to the researchers named here for participating in a

focused discussion around the content of this paper in April 2011. From this vantage point, two insights have emerged: first, universities can play a number of significant supportive roles to communities in "…creating new knowledge or understanding about a practical community issue in order to bring about change" (Hills & Mullet, 2000, p. 1); and second, the lead researcher/facilitator's relationship with the community cannot be understated, and requires individuals knowledgeable and skilled in community development processes.

The University's Role

In these five examples, Algoma University supported the projects in several different ways: as a funder, as an advocate, as a creator of community space for reflection, as an authority which could lend its credibility to the community's efforts, and as an educator for social transformation.

The funding for these projects was administered both through the CESD department at Algoma University, and later, after its incorporation, through NORDIK, a community-based research institute affiliated with Algoma and with the CESD programme. In all of these projects, however, the research funding was used as leverage for other dollars – none of the projects could have been achieved with a single funding source. While juggling several funders and their reporting requirements may be onerous, universities tend to have the capacity in their accounting departments which small community-based organizations often do not, and this is a valuable supportive role which universities can play. University-trained personnel often have closer relationships to funders and are therefore sometimes better able to identify the language and negotiate priorities which will ensure success in funding applications (Broad, 2010), again a task frequently too onerous for smaller organizations.

Universities are recognized by the various levels of government and by communities as official sites of knowledge creation and accorded an authority which community based organizations may not be able to easily obtain. For community groups, this increased credibility through research partnerships can be a crucial component to achieving or accelerating the impact of the research outcomes and be an opportunity for communities to value their own work. Recognizing TEK and incorporating it into university courses, pointing out that CBR is a legitimate form of research, and making university programmes accessible and relevant to communities are all highly significant ways that universities can contribute to communities' self-organizing activities.

Understanding the role of the university as one of "creating the space" for communities to undertake their own investigations acknowledges a community's autonomy – but this is not necessarily easy for university researchers or administrators. Listening to community need – rather than following one's own

research interests – takes universities and researchers on a different journey, perhaps even down a river on a raft.

In turn, universities are themselves changed by these experiences. Academics who have learned from Elders who have recognized the in-depth knowledge that community members have about their lands, their environments, and the dedication and hard work required to protect and advance the community's interests are changed by this experience. The academics named here teach their courses differently, define research differently, and have been changed by exposure to the community's knowledge, and the opportunity to work with the community's members.

Tensions Between Communities and Universities

O'Connor (2011) observed that she didn't have a relationship to the "institution;" she was not hired on as a researcher, and in fact received no compensation for taking the lead on the project. Her relationship "… was with Gayle," a friend and colleague who supported the project through the provision of funding for a student-researcher. But the other researchers, including myself, who were all employed by the university, experienced a variety of tensions.

Savory-Gordon had a particularly difficult moment when she was questioned about the legitimacy of the research by a university administrator (prompted by the phone call from a local politician outlined above). Her first instinct was to protect CESD/NORDIK from potential disciplinary or adverse reactions by divorcing the research from the university. Doing community based research – which by its nature is intended to be socially transformative – is likely to "ruffle some feathers" through challenges to the status quo. In fact, more frequently than not, successful CBR will create at the very least some debate within the community.

In a common reflection between the researchers named in this chapter, there was substantial discussion regarding the role of the university in community-university partnerships, and how the university can support or hinder the advancement of the community's self-organizing work. The researchers' reflections identified that Algoma University may be somewhat uniquely placed to support community-based research because of its mandate to support regional development and Indigenous learning and because it is home to NORDIK Institute and the Community Economic and Social Development (CESD) programme, both of which share the principles and values essential to respectful community-university research partnerships. These features all tend to make the institution more flexible, more rooted in the community and more experimental in its approach.

Relationship Between Researcher and Community

The term "partnership" implies both a balancing of power as well as a foundation of trust, elements which were apparent in each of the projects examined here. In every case, the researcher was already deeply engaged with the community prior to the development of the project through social and/or family relations. For example, O'Connor is a social worker who has discovered the therapeutic benefits of maintaining a regular art practice. For Anne, art has been an integral part of her life, forming the foundation for the research required to acknowledge and celebrate Ken McDougall's contribution to a Northern Ontario identity. Deep community roots have informed the other researchers in similar fashion: José Reyes was a founding member of ASOPRICOR almost twenty-five years ago; Sheila Gruner first went to Fort Albany First Nation to do literacy work but her fiddle, her interest in ecology, and her deep commitment to addressing the social injustices perpetrated by colonialism kept her strongly connected to many community members after her contract expired; Linda Savory-Gordon was a regular rail passenger using the train to access her cottage several years before she became involved with CAPT; and I had grown up on one of the farms that became a partner in Penokean Hills.

These long-term social relations provide a basis for research which Heron states "… is a vision of persons in reciprocal relation using the full range of their sensibilities to inquire together into any aspect of the human condition" (1996, p. 1). In Heron's view, the co-researchers (both community members and academic researchers) are co-subjects in the inquiry, engaging in a cyclical process of action and reflection-upon-the-action, which eliminates boundaries between the researcher and "subject" – creating a mutual experience of co-creation of knowledge. In the research outlined here, the lines between the researcher and community are blurred; the researchers have been working with communities – not conducting research on them. This approach to research is very likely to lead to – or perhaps even require – researchers who are embedded in long-term social relations with community. How else to engage in cyclical processes of action and reflection?

Long-term involvement with the community also leads to dense networks of relationships between the researcher and a variety of community members, thus providing a diversity of perspectives on the research project. Savory-Gordon's role as a train passenger offered numerous opportunities for her to meet rail employees, tourist operators and other cottagers, providing an ideal location from which to build a coalition. It also provided her with a greater understanding of the sometimes conflicting views on issues such as train scheduling. But perhaps most importantly, it provided community members with an opportunity to see her and her family and friends as an integral part of the community affected by rail service, not simply as a researcher. Gruner states that she "is straddling a

number of identities" (Gruner, 2011) in her role with Fort Albany First Nation, sometimes writing funding applications and acting as a connecting link to other resources, sometimes teaching courses on research methods in the community, and sometimes being a graduate student.

In their group reflection, none of the researchers were comfortable with the idea that they held a leadership role in the research, and O'Connor suggested that she tried to "lead from behind" and suggested that perhaps it was because she was not a leader in the arts community, and therefore non-threatening, that she was able to successfully enjoin so many people and organizations in the film-making; "my organizing skills are acceptable because I am not competing" (O'Connor, 2011).

Trusting relationships based on equality between partners are developed over time as partners demonstrate that they can be relied upon to be respectful of one another. Relationships are strengthened as partners engage with one another, reflect on that experience, and then choose to re-engage (or not) at a new and deeper level. Researchers, who are already embedded in the community, become aware of emerging issues early on because the lines of communication are already well established and they are able to respond quickly because this foundation of trust already exists.

Respectful of Indigenous, Local and Informal Knowledges

> The community has informed our understanding of how knowledge is created and transferred, and provided us with a context for interpreting and critiquing the learnings provided in more formal settings. (Broad & Reyes, 2008, p. 146)

A second characteristic shared by these projects is the researchers' deep respect for local and informal knowledges as outlined above. For example, the Paquataskimik project is based on a profound respect for Indigenous peoples' knowledges and ways of knowing. Sheila Gruner has been facilitating the documenting of this knowledge through research which has encompassed a variety of projects: engaging youth in audio taping elders' storytelling and airing them on community radio; supporting intergenerational excursions on the rivers and waterways of the region to identify places and practices of historical and cultural significance; alerting the community to issues in policy development. These activities have been rooted in a deep respect for the community's knowledge of what is in its own best interests, and its need to determine its future in full knowledge of its past.

Designing a successful marketing campaign for Penokean Hills Farms would have been impossible without the extensive knowledge of the local producers, not only about producing beef that is tender and flavourful enough to appeal

to consumers, but also about the substantially detailed regulations and policies surrounding food production and sales. For example, the "buy local beef" campaign was frequently challenged by the regulations affecting the transport and storage of beef. While a researcher could possibly have identified all of the pertinent regulations, the detailed planning related to the marketing campaign was informed and facilitated by the farmers' in-depth and detailed knowledge, reducing and/or eliminating large investments of time and facilitating youth interns' capacity to do much of the marketing "legwork."

This respect for differing knowledges, differing worldviews and ways of knowing – and reinforcement of it through frequent acknowledgement by the researcher - helps to equalize the playing field between the community and university partners, recognizing community members as equal or superior partners in the co-generation of knowledge. While this is sometimes challenging for researchers who have often received accolades as knowledge-holders and creators, it is an essential component to true partnerships in research between communities and universities, and is key to establishing respectful relations between them.

Self-Awareness, Flexibility and Humility

Research which is conducted in the spirit of "with" community, requires that researchers be flexible and adaptable, thereby implying that researchers engaging with community be prepared for humbling experiences – or at least to enter the work with a degree of humility. As Schmidt (2009) articulates, researchers need to recognize that their life experiences will not match perfectly with the social, cultural, economic and political realities of the communities with which they engage, and they must look to community members' experience and knowledge to explain these realities. One of the characteristics of the researchers named above is their preparedness to follow the community's processes, and to be critical evaluators of their own roles and actions within the research process.

During the making of the video, O'Connor never questioned that she would be learning throughout the experience, indeed, she had never before been involved in the making of a video, so she began the project with a degree of humility. But once she located a filmmaker and connected him with the artist who was the subject of the film, the film took on a whole new dimension which she had not foreseen. In her own words, she realized that she had to "get out of the way" of the content of the video and focus her efforts on the production and completion of the project.

In my own experience with Penokean Hills Farms, I have needed to call on colleagues for assistance in the design of consumer surveys, development of business plans and understanding financial data. On several occasions, our work changed direction so that we could seize opportunities which arose, or deal with

unanticipated crises. This is the nature of community-based research; researchers engaged with communities need to thrive on the many twists and turns down different paths that community based research tends to take them, rather than trying to convince the community to stay on a straight and narrow road.

Community-based research requires that researchers respect the community process – which frequently means discomfort for the researcher in terms of meeting deadlines, stretching capacity, and challenging expectations. This is not an easy task and is one which requires critical evaluation of one's own capacity, as well as the capacity to engage with others with humility.

Other researchers (e.g., Absolon & Willett, 2005) have stressed the need for researchers to be aware of their location vis à vis the community, and the researchers engaged in the projects above have certainly expressed the value of this. O'Connor describes herself as the "holder of the focus" for the makers of the video rather than as a researcher; Reyes describes himself as a "research facilitator;" while I have tried to juggle my role as a researcher with that of a farming family member.

This type of self-awareness leads to the self-confidence researchers require to step back from the community process and watch it unfold, without trying to force it in directions that might be easier or more rewarding for the researchers' own self-interest. After much reflection, I have concluded that as CBR practitioners, we should not overly concern ourselves with these many roles we need to play; in fact, perhaps we need to be confused as to our role, as we are working in concert with the community and need to be in harmony with it.

Value of Research Teams

When communities identify their own research questions, researchers may suddenly find themselves being asked to undertake research which is outside their own skill sets. Understanding oneself as an "ally" to the community – acting in a supportive role, assisting the community in identifying the type of research that the community needs – may sometimes mean that expertise needs to be sought from outside the project. When CAPT required an "opportunity study" to be conducted, for example, one which would further its credibility with both funders and policy-makers, Savory-Gordon knew that she needed assistance and called in a consulting group to assist with the project; she also used her location as an academic to identify funding sources to support the study. Research teams, drawn from different disciplines and with varying research skills from within the university can help meet the diversity of the social economy sector, reducing the reliance on consultants or external researchers.

Community Advisory Committees

Clear lines of communication, and an advisory committee of well-located community members, can also contribute to successful and beneficial research relationships. Each of the research projects identified here had active advisory committees (or in the case of O'Connor's research, a production team) composed of community members who were able to provide differing perspectives on the research, and suggest alternative processes, interpretations and actions that contributed to the overall research quality and rigor.

An Advisory Committee can also become a key line of communication from other community members to the research team, as well as from the researchers to the community. The Committee members are there to reflect a diversity of the community's membership, and thus their knowledge of the research is communicated through their own personal networks back to the community. In this way, groups which might not otherwise be reached by more traditional communication tools are made aware of the project and its activities, as well as opportunities to participate.

To co-create knowledge requires reflection, and a community advisory committee provides a designated space for that reflection to take place – at monthly or weekly meetings, at the time that the active researchers prepare reports to the committee, and when the committee members discuss the progress of the activities with the broader community. Through their close involvement with the research process, community advisory committees also learn a great deal about research processes including gaining insight into ethical issues, and thus their capacity to conduct or lead research projects is enhanced.

Conclusion

Savory-Gordon (2011) observes that CBR "fits well with building a movement but at the same time [allows us to] gather the kind of information that we need to further what we need to do." Implicit in this reflection is an understanding that the role of the researcher vis-à-vis the community is a crucial one. To build solid community-university partnerships requires that the researcher adopt a facilitative role, listening and responding to community-identified needs, and respecting the local and/or indigenous expertise in the co-creation of knowledge. It also suggests that universities need to find ways to support researchers in a non-traditional form of inquiry, where relationship-building goes well beyond "networking" to an authentic and sincere engagement with communities.

Based on the above discussion, the social economy may in fact be a prime location for establishing community-university partnerships due to some of the same factors that make it challenging. Community-university partnerships are

able to develop teams of researchers, some from the community, and some from the university, thereby co-creating knowledge which goes beyond what either has to offer individually. The diversity of the social economy can be addressed by having diverse research teams who share skills and capacities to support the community's work. By engaging in long term relations with communities, where researchers are engaged in both action and reflection with the community and are respectful of local knowledge, universities can effectively respond to community members and organizations still in the initial stages of development.

The social economy, with its broad diversity of actors and in its evolutionary stages, is a rich site for research, and with careful attention to research practice, it can be an ideal site for community-university partnerships. It does require, however, flexibility and humility on the part of researchers, and supportive and innovative processes and approaches to achieve respectful relations between the partners.

Endnotes

1. The author wishes to acknowledge the researchers and communities named herein for generously sharing their thoughts and reflections on research in the social economy.

2. These projects were part of the Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern Ontario node in the Social Economy Suite. A full listing of the projects can be found in Table 6.1, located between Chapters 6 and 7.

3. Government of Canada. Panel on Research Ethics (2011) Chapter 1. Retrieved from http://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter1-chapitre1/#toc01-1b

4. Government of Canada. Panel on Research Ethics (2011) Chapter 9. Retrieved from http://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter9-chapitre9/

5. Project CL5-03-NO, see Table 6.1. See http://captrains.com/ for more detailed information about the organization.

6. http://www.groupofseventrainevent.ca/

7. http://www.nordikinstitute.com/index.php

8. Project CL1-02-NO, see Table 6.1.See http://penokeanhillsfarms.com/ for more detailed information about the organization.

9. "Paquataskamik" is a Mushkegowuk (Cree) word, which loosely translated means "the natural environment." The territories referred to are those along the Albany River watershed area in the far northern region of Ontario, leading into James Bay.

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Table 6.1: Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Northern Ontario Research Node

CL1-01-NO Community Resilience in the City of Sault Ste. Marie
CL1-02-NO Penokean Hills Farms Marketing Project
CL1-03-NO Recovery of the Collective Memory and Projection into the Future: ASOPRICOR
CL1-04-NO Garden River First Nation Performance of Hiawatha
CL1-06-NO Northern Ontario Women's Economic Development Conference
CL1-07-NO Community Supported Agriculture
CL1-08-NO Aboriginal Women in Non-profits
CL1-10-NO Knowing Traditional Territory: An Inter-Generational Dialogue for Community Research
CL1-11-MB Community Research Hub: a Case Study of Social Economy
CL1-12-MB Harvest Moon Society Marketing Co-op: Building Social Capital through an Alternative Food Economy
CL1-13-MB Eat Where You Live: Building a Social Economy of Local Food in Western Canada
CL1-14-SK Aboriginal Funding Database
CL1-15-SK A New Vision for SK: Changing Lives and Systems Through Individualized Funding for People with Intellectual Disabilities
CL1-16-SK Cypress Hills Abilities Centres, Inc.: Exploring Alternatives
CL1-17-SK Advancing the Co-op Sector: Mapping Development Needs of Co-ops in Emerging, Under-represented, and Struggling Sectors
CL1-18-SK Leading a Vibrant Co-operative Sector: A Communications Strategy for Saskatchewan Co-operative Association
CL1-19-SK Investing in the Successful Reintegration of Aboriginal Peoples Returning from Incarceration
CL1-20-SK Sharing our gifts: The Story of Ohpahow Wawesecikiwak Arts Marketing Co-operative Limited
CL1-21 Empowerment through Co-operation: Disability Solidarity in the Social Economy
CL1-22 Co-operative Marketing Options for Organic Agriculture
CL1-23-SK Evaluation of Saskatoon Urban Aboriginal Strategy
CL1-24-MB Beyond Local: Building Urban-Rural Solidarity Through Food Relationships
CL1-25-SK Assessing Partnership and Collaboration for Improving Quality of Life for People with Disabilities. What is the Role of the Social Economy?
CL1-26-SK Mapping Health Disparity: The Role of the Social Economy in Duck Lake
CL1-27-MB Course Development: Management of Co-operatives

CLI -28-MB A Global Market in the Heat of Winnipeg: Measuring and Mapping the Social and Cultural Development of the Central Market for Global Families
CL1-29-NO Urban Aboriginal Economic Development: Learning Circles
CL1-30-NO Labour Market Study: A Community Based Research Report
CL2-01 Sustainable Financing for the Social Economy, Phase I
CL2-02 Sustainable Financing for the Social Economy, Phase II
CL2-03 An Economic Analysis of Canadian Credit Union Microfinance Schemes
CL2-04 Financing Aboriginal Enterprise Development: The Feasibility of Using Co-op Models
CL3-01-SK Self-determination in Action: The Entrepreneurship of the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association Co-operative
CL3-02 Toolkit for Empowering Practices in Social Economy Governance and Planning
CL3-03 Self-Assessment of Democratic Character in Organizations
CL3-04 Cognition and Governance in the Social Economy: Innovation in Multi-stakeholder Organizations
CL3-05 Exploring Collaborative Governance Models
CL4-01-NO Initiatives, pratiques et appuis au DÉC: la participation de l'Économie Sociale dans la construction des capacités des communautés francophones: Nord de l'ON, MB et SK
CL4-02-SK Linking, Learning, Leveraging: Sustainable Social Economy Organizations in Rural, Southeast Saskatchewan: A Research Report
CL4-03-SK Community Resilience, Adaptation, and Innovation: The Case of the Social Economy in La Ronge
CL4-04-SK Growing Pains: Social Enterprise in Saskatoon's Core Neighbourhoods
CL4-05-SK Mapping Social Capital in a Community Development Organizations
CL4-06 Measuring and Mapping the Impact of Social Enterprises: Co-ops
CL4-08 Mapping Social Economy Organizations in ON
CL4-09 Measuring the Effectiveness of Social Enterprises
CL4-10 Mapping the Social Economy of MB and SK
CL4-11 Mapping the Impact of Credit Unions in Canada
CL4-12 Mapping the Nature and Extent of the Social Economy in Aboriginal Communities
CL4-13-MB Mapping Ethnocultural Organizations in Brandon and Rural Manitoba
CL4-14-MB When Every Day Brings a New Emergency: Building Community Resilience to Disaster in a High-Risk Neighbourhood
CL4-15 Outcomes and Organizational Form in the Child Care Sector: How do Co-operatives Compare?
CL4-16-MB Profile of Community Economic Development in Manitoba

CL4-17-NO A Case Study in Building Respectful Relations in the Social Economy
CL4-18-NO Sault Ste. Marie Labour and the Social Economy: A Case Study
CL4-19-SK Exploring the Social Economy in Saskatchewan: Urban, Rural and Northern
CL5-01-NO Culture, Creativity, and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability Sault Ste. Marie
CL5-02-NO Social Enterprises and the ON Disability Support Program: A Policy Perspective on Employing Persons with Disabilities
CL5-03-NO Coalition of Algoma Passenger Trains
CL5-04-MB The Importance of Policy for Community Economic Development: A Case Study of the Manitoba Context
CL5-05-MB Enabling Policy Environments for Co-operative Development: A Comparative Experience
CL5-06-SK Exploring Key Informants' Experiences with Self-Directed Funding: A Research Report
CL5-07 Social Economy Public Policy Survey
CL5-08 Social Economy Leadership: Lessons in Organizational Entrepreneurship and Government Partnership
CL5-09 The Promise and Potential of Worker Co-ops in Canada
CL5-10 Re-engaging Citizens: Co-ops as Public Policy Instruments for Democratic Renewal
CL5-11 Adult Education and the Social Economy: Rethinking the Communitarian Pedagogy of Watson Thomson
CL5-12 Anishinaabek Communities of the Boreal and the Impacts of Roads: Paving the Way Towards a Social Economy?
CL5-13 Municipal Government Support of the Social Economy Sector: An Analysis of Best Practices
CL5-14 Houses and Communities: Learning from a Case Study of Co-operative Assisted Home Ownership in Saskatchewan
CL5-15-SK South Bay Park Rangers employment Project For Persons Living with a Disability: A Case Study in Individual Empowerment and Community Interdependence
CL5-16-SK Exploring Social Entrepreneurship in Saskatchewan
CL5-17-SK Factors Affecting the Decision of International Students and their Spouses to Settle in Saskatchewan, Canada
CL5-18-SK Lessons Learned on the Justice Trapline
CL5-19-SK Building a Long Term Strategy for People with Disabilities: The Case of Ile-a-la Crosse
CL5-20-SK Building Social Economy Support in Urban Settings

CL5-21-SK Self Directed Funding Supporting National Partnership Building and Developing a Model that can Work for All
CL5-22-NO Inuit Harvesting, the Social Economy, and Political Participation
CL5-23-NO Breathing Northwinds: Networking Northern Arts
CL5-24-NO Plan for Developing the Arts in Northern Ontario
CL5-25-NO / Rural Youth Research Internship Project: The Impact of Community Futures Development Corps.

CHAPTER 7

Research as Engagement: Rebuilding the Knowledge Economy of the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association Co-operative

Dr. Isobel M. Findlay
Edwards School of Business, Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, and Community University Institute for Social Research, University of Saskatchewan

Clifford Ray
Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association Co-operative

Maria Basualdo
Community University Institute for Social Research, University of Saskatchewan

> Our young people are losing their culture and tradition and language. … They want their culture and tradition as an Indian, but then they have to have education to live in this modern day. . – They are going towards the whites now, towards the white way of life. And so that is affecting our way of life too – Trapper
>
> We are not looking for handouts; we would like to be self-sustainable – Trapper (Pattison & Findlay, 2010, pp. 31-33)

The words of the trappers offer invaluable context and incentive for a research partnership funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) Community University Research Alliance (CURA), "Linking, Learning, Leveraging: Social Enterprises, Knowledgeable Economies and Sustainable Development," the Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan Regional Node of the Social Economy Suite (with Principal Investigator Lou Hammond Ketilson).[1] The research initiated by the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association Co-operative (NSTAC), in response to the Community-University Institute for Social Research's (CUISR) call for proposals, records and fosters activities to engage Aboriginal youth, reconnect the generations, and contribute to environmental sustainability, socio-economic development, and cultural revitalization of northern communities. Our focus here is on relationship building and knowledge sharing (cross-cultural and inter-generational) at the heart of our research process. We reflect on the models from which we have learned and the enriching practice bridging community

and academic cultures, as well as traditional and social economies, the reviving and relegitimating of cultural memory—so necessary to redesigning research as engagement and rebuilding trapping as a sustainable knowledge economy.

First, this chapter reviews the context for community-university partnerships and the particular obligations associated with an emergent Aboriginal co-operative, which includes 2400 members and covers 500,000 square kilometers in 80 fur blocks across treaty 6, 8, and 10 territory. Second, it shares our experience of rethinking research to build trust and capacity in communities targeted too often by researchers, policy makers, and the broader community as rich sources of data (Smith, 1999) or as "problems" to be solved (Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007). Those problems are typically articulated in terms of gaps, lags, or divides, in terms of a deficit model of Aboriginal deficiency and dependency, itself the legacy of colonial binary logic and narratives of "civilized progress," on which so much social and political theory is based (Henderson, Benson, & Findlay, 2000). Third, it considers how the evolving research engaged in a larger vision of trapping as a means of preserving Aboriginal culture, increasing economic opportunities, engaging young people to relearn their identities, and reconnecting the generations for hope, healing and health. Finally, the chapter reviews the lessons learned about decolonizing research for reconstructed identities, new thinking and action, and sustainable, healthy communities.

This chapter's decolonizing thrust means that we are less interested here in fitting the research process and product into the more or less rigid frames of academic scholarship on the north than in retrieving trapping from layers of presumption, distortion, and evasion. As Wilson (2008) argues, "the western paradigm can amputate" your identity, including "your language and your spirituality," failing to see your accountability to "all your relations" in research (pp. 56-57). Respecting these notions of relationality, we are not interested here in taking on the arguments of those who review trapping within the history of the fur trade (Morton, 1973; Ray, 2005), or "the dual economy model" with assumptions about the priority of individual employment (Stabler, 1989). Nor do we wish to engage with the "mixed economy" model based on local conditions (Ross & Usher, 1986; Southcott, 2003), "comprehensive development" focused on "political, economic, and cultural change" (Elias, 1997), or the "subsistence" and social or "stakeholder" economy (Southcott, 2009). Instead of discussing within mainstream notions of what counts or not for progress, reinforcing "the sterile dualisms" (Abele, 2009), we are interested here in a book on community-university research partnerships doing some justice to what the trappers have to say. We aim to do some justice to how they see the world and how they define their way of life and responsibility to "All my relations" (an extended set of relations that recognizes and respects the animate in all things, our relationship with the land, the creatures, the elements, the spirit world).

Consistent with the linking, learning, and leveraging that have been at the heart of the social economy research within our node, we take this opportunity to share our learning from what Henderson (2008) calls "the teaching civilization" who are no longer content to be "the willing learners of modernity" (p. 48) or ready to let academic others perpetuate "relations of ruling" (Smith, 1990), those elite ideological constructions that the dominant culture embeds. Our story here makes clear the dangers of losing the voices of the community to the interests of the university and academic paradigms and protocols. The research has been importantly about relationships nourished at provincial, regional, and other conferences and meetings. The research has developed relationships not only within the NSTAC but across communities in Saskatchewan; for instance: with the arts marketing co-operative on Big River First Nations (CL1-20-SK, Table 6.1) and the Gary Tinker Federation working with Aboriginal people with disabilities in the north (CL5-15-SK, Table 6.1). It has built relationships across the regional node, finding common cause with the Swampy Cree of Fort Albany, Ontario (CL1-10-NO, Table 6.1), their relation to the land, drive to self-determination, and commitment to the holistic term Paquataskimik (or traditional territory, including everything on it) rather than noscheemik (camp or bush) that loses the sense of connection and relationships. Appreciating the community building of Garden River First Nation (CL1-04-NO, Table 6.1), it has also identified strongly with the research methods, aspirations, and efforts of ASOPRICOR in Colombia to redefine development in its own terms, linking the histories of Turtle Island and Abiayala (mature land) or South America (CLI-03-NO, Table 6.1).

Community-University Partnership: Background and Context

In the face of the contradictory effects of globalization and neoliberalism (Harvey, 2005; Bauman, 1998), partnering is the new norm. Collectively, these processes contribute to governments downloading responsibilities to communities and promoting market efficiencies over citizen welfare (Melo & Baiocchi, 2006). Community-based organizations (CBOs) experience government off-loading as demands to partner to meet growing needs with insufficient resources. Just as the local community is heralded as panacea, so partnerships are similarly hailed as solutions to complex, interrelated problems and limited resources. CBOs needing to support funding applications and policy change with timely, relevant research often look to partnerships with universities (Stoecker, 2007). Yet the complex politics and cultures of productive partnerships are often underestimated (Macdonald & Chrisp, 2005), while such "warmly persuasive" buzzwords as participation and empowerment can be pretexts for development that legitimates intervention, aggravates domination, and entrenches business as usual (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). Instead, a critically reflexive relation to partnership is needed to support "context-specific knowledge networks" for effective "place-based learning communities" (Davidson-Hunt & O'Flaherty, 2007, p. 291).

In line with this larger partnering phenomenon, SSHRC's CURAs bring together communities and universities to build knowledge on issues facing Canadians. CURAs emerged in response to perceptions about the remoteness of universities and the related presumption that knowledge flows one way: from university to host communities. According to SSHRC's President Chad Gaffield, these collaborations keep Canada "at the leading-edge of research, development and innovation in the 21st century" (SSHRC, 2010). Nevertheless, despite its emphasis on partner equality, SSHRC depends on an overstretched CBO contributing in-kind, personnel, and/or financial resources, while being warned to avoid the "formulaic" in letters confirming willingness "to complete activities assigned to it." Not only has community apparently no capacity to assign activities, but it rarely receives credit (or enhanced rankings) that universities and academics enjoy when funding is announced or that SSHRC receives in acknowledgements of research support. Still, SSHRC offers salary replacement stipends covering up to 50 per cent of the cost of replacing staff research investigators.

As an "engaged university," the University of Saskatchewan likewise invests in "focused and collaborative endeavours … where research embraces critical issues of importance to society … and where partnerships … make the university's contributions visible and meaningful" (University of Saskatchewan, 2011). But, like many others, the university struggles to live up to community-based research (CBR) commitments and adjust its investments in innovation (associated with science and technology), entrenched specialization (discourses of disciplinary depth and enfeebling interdisciplinary breadth), and its timelines and tenure and promotion standards. If CBR is on the university's radar, it — together with its public outreach, co-authorship, and multi-mediated outputs — often remains suspect for its accessible style and activist orientation. CBR remains something of a poor cousin to the "disinterested" scholarship of quantitative research for refereed academic journals. For many, the university remains "the prototype of the gated community," preserving the privilege of the "hidden curriculum," an intellectual monoculture, and "celebrity culture" (Hawkesworth, 2002). While SSHRC invites diverse dissemination and qualitative measures of research impact, the standard curriculum vitae remains a numbers game with refereed articles the priority, and community relationships, training and presentations relegated at best to community contributions at the end. Thus valued, knowledge mobilization can be insufficiently useful to community (Silka, 2003; Wiessner & Battiste, 2000) to live up to "reporting back" responsibilities (Smith, 1999, p. 15). Relations and multiple dependencies in practice are consistently refigured and reinscribed paternalistically and individualistically.

Building the Partnership

One of the first CURAs, CUISR embodies the CURA principles in research, training, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building. Launched in 1999 by faculty and community to engage in relevant, rigorous research to achieve social change, CUISR is committed to authentic partnerships reflected in shared governance (50% community; 50% university board members). For more than ten years, CUISR has worked to build healthy, sustainable communities, creating infrastructure and networks, a data clearing house and a resource library. It offers institutional and social spaces to support community engagement and public discussion, leveraging resources and exchanging and mobilizing knowledge in policy, professional, academic and public domains. Firmly in and for the community, the Institute's research aims to bridge perceived divides; offer a forum to convene and form coalitions; and provide research helping communities build capacity, leverage funding, and change policy. In the process, the human face of CUISR (its faculty, students, and staff) built social capital (Coleman, 1988) on which it could rely in its host city, Saskatoon.

With the new Social Economy CURA, in 2007, CUISR extended its geographic range (to the whole province) and research focus to five interdisciplinary strategies: Saskatoon community sustainability, social economy, rural-urban linkages, building alliances for Indigenous women's community development, and the analysis of community-university partnerships within broader urban-rural and local-global dynamics. Despite CUISR's investment in equitable governance and researcher training, building authentic partnerships remained challenging, especially when we moved outside our comfort zone into northern Saskatchewan. Exporting successful research to remote sites brought out their colonial residues and required their rethinking. Building our research relationship with the NSTAC has remapped our world, protocols and practices, and reshaped our sense of who we are and can be – and how inter-relatedness in CBR is always complex and multi-directional.

The NSTAC is mandated to monitor and guide trapping development, develop policy, deliver training, and lobby government. In one of many such moves without consultation with Aboriginal peoples, the federal government's 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA) transferred natural resources to provincial responsibility, "increasing regulation" over time and eroding trapping rights and ties to a whole way of life (Passelac-Ross, 2005, p. vii). Trapping was effectively reduced from "a unique, social, spiritual and cultural relationship with the land and its resources" to a "commercial activity" subject to the "same regulatory regime that applies to all trappers, without concern for the Aboriginality of the trapping activity" (Passelac-Ross, 2005, pp.16, 37). Just over sixty years after the provincial government (in 1946), without consultation and without regard to either natural or traditional

boundaries, divided the province into two wildlife management zones, and forty years after forming the northern trappers association, the northern trappers incorporated as a not-for-profit co-operative in 2007. It did so in efforts to become sustainable, engage youth, and build capacity by regaining traditional knowledge of trapping as integral to the social fabric rather than a peripheral vocation (Nelson, Natcher, & Hickey, 2005). From the standpoint of the government – the primary funder – the restructuring enhanced and formalized the NSTAC's legitimacy, accountability and transparency. To ensure legitimacy in the eyes of its members, however, NSTAC needed to communicate the benefits of legal incorporation while respecting the values of its predominantly Aboriginal membership (Métis, Cree, & Dené). And it needed to engage their wisdom and energy, integrating co-operative governance and traditional trapper governance from an ancient and proud history of a knowledge economy sustaining livelihoods long before the mainstream thought it discovered the notion. It needed, that is, to redefine the meaning of trapping in the socio-cultural fabric of northern people, revisiting the history and consequences of government decisions to carve up the territory and regulate traditional practices.

This was the focus of the research proposal drafted by Clifford Ray as NSTAC president in consultation with his members and a trusted NSTAC advisor educated on the land and in the university and with interests in land management, forestry, and water quality. The proposal for an engagement process adding to organizational capacity was the basis of our partnership to recreate a future for Aboriginal youth living the legacy of a colonial past and present that imposed "poverty and powerlessness" on "a people who once governed their own affairs in full self-sufficiency" (Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991). And the stakes are high. If the trappers cannot prove that they are maintaining traditional lifestyle on the land, they open the door to unfettered development without infringing Aboriginal or treaty rights (Nelson, Natcher, & Hickey, 2005) or incurring the duty to consult (Government of SK, 2010; Newman, 2009). But the research process encountered challenges represented by (a) the history of research in Aboriginal communities; (b) the extent of the territory, travel and other costs; (c) the legacy of persistently colonial curriculum and pedagogy; (d) academic timelines and priorities impacting short-term research engagement; and (e) definition of the relevant community or communities.

Rethinking Participatory Action Research (PAR)

If they are not alone in experiencing research as an assimilative process, remote Aboriginal communities can feel multiply disadvantaged by a research community insensitive to the unequal distribution of benefit and reward. Smith (1999) has documented colonial research embedded in fragmented social sciences focused on "problems" to be resolved by "disinterested" experts monitoring and measuring marginalized populations. Such research systematically disdained and

dismembered Indigenous people and their knowledges in the interests of lucrative expertise that helped perpetrate "the worst excesses of colonialism," justifying the displacement of people and theft of their land and resources (Smith, 1999, p. 1). This "powerful remembered history" has stimulated decolonizing strategies and "counter-stories" among Indigenous researchers and the like-minded in research both "humble and humbling" in their "recovery of ourselves, an analysis of colonialism, and a struggle for self-determination" (Smith, 1999, pp. 1-7). Such research unpacks scholarship's complicity in producing and reproducing inequalities and injustices in white settler society (Findlay, 2003; Razack, 2002). If the research gaze remains fixed exclusively on the non-academic community, then blame is confined there too. A unidirectional scrutiny produces academic alibis as well as usable data, resetting interdependency and colonial dependency.

To address this history of earned mistrust among Aboriginal communities, we could not rely on CUISR's familiarity or social capital. Instead, a critical agent was the trusted NSTAC advisor who knew and trusted CUISR personnel and brought us together and participated in early research discussions. Based on a literature review, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews (individual and group), governance and engagement were the first focus of our research partnership. The interview formats were semi-structured in concert with PAR principles (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991).

But we discovered the limitations of our approach in communities six and more hours away by road and with uneven access to cell or e-mail. The student researcher attended an executive meeting and an annual convention to observe and to meet informally with NSTAC members. The majority of interviews were done during the River Gathering Festival in Pelican Narrows, 10–13 August 2007. NSTAC President Clifford Ray selected participants for interviews lasting from twenty minutes to two and a half hours with board members, elders, NSTAC members, women trappers from Manitoba and Alberta, and community members. In the early stages, the geographic distance between and linguistic diversity of researchers and NSTAC members limited the interaction one might expect from CBR. For example, interviews were limited to members who participated in the River Gathering event and who had the resources and desire to attend (the majority from the east of the province).

Admittedly too, research was at first conducted by a student intern who understood himself as an outside observer looking in and not as part of a collaborative team – despite training by Clifford as community researcher and Isobel as principal investigator with experience in Aboriginal communities. The result in a first draft report on findings was a wakeup call – a challenge to make decolonizing a more visible part of the process. For all the student researcher's efforts to listen and learn and to capture the social importance of trapping, the voices of the trappers were overwhelmed by the dominating narrative of trappers

dependent on government, inadequately prepared and facing overwhelming barriers to survival (global economy and international boycotts). Each of these frames aggravated the tendency to locate the problems in trappers and not in the globalizing forces that had presumed and continue to presume to define the trappers' livelihood. The ubiquity of such colonial narratives in university curricula, media, and government publications meant that government policy responsible for the erosion of Aboriginal, trapping, and treaty rights garnered only a passing reference – as did environmental issues impacting renewed and shared interest in sustainability, food security, and healthy lifestyles. Nor did trapping become visible as a customary practice regulating human behavior, teaching people their place in the world, their roles and responsibilities to "All their relations." It became clear to all of us – including the student himself – that the draft's shortcomings owed much to our failure to anticipate the impact of dominant thinking and research associated with distance and disinterest. We also underestimated training in academic writing that paid scant attention to audience and purpose: who was the report for, what might they do with it, and what uses could others make of it. Our academic relations of inquiry were more dependent than we realized on D. Smith's (1990) "relations of ruling."

Developing the Three Rs of Engaged CBR

In their decolonizing efforts, researchers have developed participatory and community-based qualitative research associated with trust building, local knowledge, a type of "revolutionary science" that acknowledges its politics while maintaining its "discipline" (Fals Borda, 1987, p. 330). They are interested in how people give meaning to their lives by exposing myths and nourishing stories that encourage people to imagine alternatives and value their own agency and community connections, seeing how "truths" and "identities" have been constructed and can be deconstructed and displaced/replaced. The new research paradigm, research by and with communities (DeLemos, 2007), moves from positivist distance and disinterest to critical inquiry focused on socially constructed power relations and knowledge (Carroll, 2004; Crotty, 2003; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). As Boser (2006) argues, the objective of such community-campus participatory approaches, in which critical reflection is key, is "co-generating knowledge" and "sharing decision-making based on that knowledge" (p. 9).

Challenges remain in effectively dispersing authority, sharing the power to define and ensuring mutually beneficial outcomes. Doing PAR is, as Davidson-Hunt and O'Flaherty (2007) argue, not a matter of "a list of procedures and protocols to be followed" (p. 304). They propose "dialogic networks" or what they call "place-based learning communities" (p. 291) that do not treat Indigenous knowledge as artifact but as dynamic and adaptive. To realize those communities, we need to find the terms appropriate to meaningful dialogue

and mutual education, constant acts of translation and negotiation. We need to monitor presumptions around the local and global (never as discrete, distinct, or impermeable as some suggest). And we need to stretch understandings of locality to acknowledge and respect "All my relations" as shaping the understanding and actions of all research partners. Davidson-Hunt and O'Flaherty suggest thinking of the local "through the lens of intimacy, as part of an all encompassing field of affective social relations" (p. 326).

Learning from each other and from each of these sources, we also learned to decolonize our ways in the context of the Indigenous humanities, a strategically labeled and actively produced set of theories and practices (Battiste et al., 2005). In the name of the Indigenous humanities, new coalitions and capacity-building take decolonizing as their objective and Indigenous issues as their focus. These collaborative, interdisciplinary, intercultural initiatives were born out of frustration with colonial institutions that continue to know what is best for Aboriginal peoples, that worry about making education accessible to them without considering how access can be made meaningful, how the institution might change, or how transformative Indigenous knowledge might be. So our university like other institutions remains committed to the discourse of "the problem," preserving insider expertise, while deferring or spurning opportunities for change.

In working together in the Indigenous humanities, we aim to make inquiry more relational, sociable, and modest. We all have a stake in dismantling colonial structures that have misshaped us all. Decolonizing is important for all of us because colonialism has taught us negative strategies of difference, habits of hierarchy and deference, and patterns of commodifying and compartmentalizing that rationalize the most irrational acts (Henderson, Benson, & Findlay, 2000). As a result, we share the obligation to resist cults of impossibility and promote possibilities of thinking and dreaming otherwise. Refusing to be constrained by colonial identity categories that have entrenched unbridgeable cultural divides, we find common ground while respecting our differences and remythologizing who we are and would like to be. Outside the hype of growth and global competition, our aspirations are both more ambitious and more modest: "cognitive justice" and "prudent knowledge for a decent life" (Santos, 2007).

Working with the NSTAC has breathed new life into what we call the three Rs of community engagement – research, relationships, and reflexivity – as it is helping reframe policy and programming horizons. Extending our geographic boundaries has stretched our thinking and deepened our relationships with research partners. Our three Rs are necessary correctives to colonial education's coercive three Rs, the legacy of which is still felt keenly in the North. As one trapper put it, "here in the bush you don't have to use a pencil. You have to use your brain because that is your gift to use your brain and your heart" (Pattison & Findlay, 2010, p. 33). Instead of the low expectations of the colonial classroom,

our three Rs promote heightened expectations of all and mutual learning. Our collaborative research is itself an important site of learning, relationship and capacity building, identity formation, social integration, and community renewal. Together we acknowledge our responsibility for actively producing (never simply discovering) data (Schnarch, 2004).

Reflexivity (Bourdieu, 1990) is an iterative process that allows us to critically focus on strengths and limitations throughout even if it is resisted more or less fiercely within the university as endless self-regard and in the community as ivory tower introspection and inaction. Reflexivity encourages rethinking orthodoxies, attitudes, plans, and directions to adapt to new project developments and learning. It means not the deferral of action, but action with a heightened sense of people and place and our responsibilities to them. The research is rigorous and the relationships strong to the extent that we take the time to reflect continually on who we are, how we do what we do, what benefits accrue, and to whom – and to be ourselves!

Putting Theory into Practice

For PAR (and its variants) to be effective, we learned, more resources of time, money and people are needed than many communities (including SSHRC-funded academic ones) can muster. The result of our rethinking was an investment in extended timelines (beyond a graduate student term unfortunately), more interviews with key informants and government officials, and a renewed commitment to learning together in ongoing discussions, analysis and interpretation. We met formally and informally in the north, in Saskatoon and places in between, and attended further conventions, workshops, and conferences. Increasingly, Clifford helped present our research findings to diverse audiences and design research to investigate ecotourism and justice trapline options as part of the larger cultural revitalization goal. The three Rs approach empowered the community to celebrate their local expertise and capacity. Over time the relationships strengthened, the iterative reflection deepened understandings, and the research team found its thinking constantly challenged and combining in a NSTAC common vision.

We engaged more people in the research to reconstitute the relevant community. If the definition of community (who is entitled to speak for and with the trappers) remains an issue for some, our strategy learned from the NSTAC to extend community boundaries beyond the NSTAC (which already welcomes all who wish to participate) and to invite Band and Village Councils, schools, youth and elders to participate. We leveraged resources from the Co-operatives Secretariat's, Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI) Innovation and Research Grant to investigate ecotourism, including co-operative and business training. Understanding the role of sustaining infrastructure and networks

of support, we engaged an Advisory Council from the co-operative sector, government, education, health, tourism, and outfitters, as well as regional and community councils. In training sessions we acted on learning about culturally coded practices from conference design to training and research that perpetuate the status quo. We learned from witnessing training in Aboriginal communities delivered in the classroom with minimal interaction and community consultations based on PowerPoint slides full of statistics, tables, figures, and technical terms presented by an English-speaker to Cree and Dene speakers. And we learned from efforts to engage Aboriginal women in a talking circle that followed the form but not the protocol of taking turns to speak when one is ready, speaking from the heart, listening respectfully, and maintaining the safety and confidentiality of the circle . In this case, the chair held forth almost without interruption. Learning of the need for proper protocol, community control, indirect styles, and "fertile ground," including the bush, for skills and knowledge to develop (Nelson, Natcher, & Hickey, 2005), we promoted intergenerational dialogue to engage elders, senior trappers, and youth in training on co-operatives, co-operation and trapping. A developer told stories of co-operative development; we talked about the NSTAC vision before witnessing cultural memory in action, as trappers and elders told stories that had the youth seeing and articulating anew what they had taken for granted about the north, finding the answers that were always there waiting for them. Just as in PAR, there was no manual, but protocols of respect to do this work. Talking together opened eyes and minds to new forms of legitimacy, sources of pride in a traditional way of life, to a rich history and powerful teachers. Co-operatives and co-operation were associated like trapping with "good management and accountability," with "working and learning all together for our communities, members, and justice," with "sharing and building together," "putting community first" and "uniting by alternating leadership." They were associated with "making everybody strong," "families helping each other," and "listening to the elders and respecting their knowledge." As they talked about co-operatives, they enriched the model, remembering their own proud history of co-operation, stretching the terms of co-operative engagement to include self-determination and interdependence and reimagining community (including the research one) as "All my relations."

We received notice of the CDI granting program in late February 2009 and completed by the end of the federal financial year (March 2009). But not at the expense of fun and friendship! We played and ate together too, having lunch at the one restaurant on reserve – one that few of the youth had ever experienced. That was an important part of solidifying relationships and learning to speak each other's languages to the extent that we completed everything within a month in deepest winter in mid-trapping season and mid-academic term! And Maria and Isobel were honoured to be taught some Cree by the youth and welcomed by the elders as members of the community. As we challenged notions

of who were the legitimate community, we also expanded notions of the research community, hiring high school students to act as researchers in intergenerational dialogue with elders. In training we were careful to demystify research and show that it was a matter of curiosity and conversation, asking questions and listening to stories, using whatever means the students chose to record their findings (for instance: photo, painting, performance, storytelling, and drama) in recognition that community reconstitutes itself in the process. Seeing the pride in the students' faces as they talked about their work and receiving their cheques from the University marked important differences in research that is avowedly community-based. So it was less about "discovering" the relevant community, as reconstituting communities in the research process and recognizing our accountability for the choices and interventions we make and the learning and outcomes we generate together.

Colonial History and Cultural Memory

Even though trapping history is often reduced to the history of the fur trade (Morton, 1973; Ray, 2005), trapping has an ancient history as a sustainable knowledge economy, although there was no word for trapping in Indigenous languages. It is a history celebrated by the elders as *pimâcihowin* (making a living) connected to *pimâtisiwin* (life) and *askiy* (land) as a source of life and guaranteed by the treaties as a continuing right (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 43). It represented life as a holistic balance of skills, knowledge, and dependencies linking human survival to sustainable practices and responsible, respectful stewardship of the land. According to Elder Bart McDonald, "The land is who we are … That was part of our livelihood….. The teaching of respect associated with the concept of *pimâcihowin* provided guidance for the ways in which individuals conducted themselves when exercising their duty to provide" (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, pp. 46-47). In the colonial era, one word was replaced by three terms – hunting, fishing, and trapping – derived from the division of labour and the production of commodities, and all three under the aegis of progress as predation. In retrieving what was always there to guide, if we could only decolonize our perception and cognition, the elders, trappers, and youth achieved "the art of the impossible in the realm of the improbable," finding "the collective strength to return to [their] traditional role as the teaching civilization, not the willing learners of modernity" (Henderson, 2008, pp. 10, 48).

Conclusion

This chapter reflects on lessons learned from one community-university partnership within a social economy research context. It tells something of the history of trapping, the impact of policy impoverishing communities, and the efforts of the NSTAC to reinvent itself and give youth "an opportunity to make a living" (Pattison & Findlay, 2010, pp. 31-32). Faced with the paralyzing effects of bureaucratic regulation, the trappers did their homework and developed partnerships with those that could complement their efforts. Instead of partnership as placebo, they looked to partnership as transformative praxis. A co-operative, we found, can be a powerful meeting place for intergenerational and intercultural dialogue and community learning. In the process, NSTAC redefines trapping as an invaluable activity expressing the values of both the ongoing and revitalizing traditional and social economies offering alternative models putting people before profits. It stretches and interfuses the understanding of trapping, co-operatives and their multiple bottom lines, adding *self-determination* and *interdependence* to co-operative principles, helping redefine education and training, expanding accountability to reconnect that which modernity uncoupled, and expanding "concern for community" to include All our relations – and all our communities.

Adopting flexible timelines, investing additional resources, and gaining diverse input, our research learned to decolonize itself for rich community building results. The mutual learning in PAR benefits the university in developing methodological theory and practice (the three Rs), as well as pedagogy and curriculum that better serve those (most conspicuously Aboriginal youth) often least engaged in education and governance. Co-operatives can accommodate tradition as innovation in therapeutic enterprise where young adults can become trappers and educators rather than the ones trapped in the alienating individualism rewarded in many mainstream institutions. In the global context of resource depletion, growing inequality, and concerns about food security and sustainability, the key roles of the NSTAC in the traditional and social economies, as well as the cultural revitalization and historical reconstruction so central to their vision, need to be broadly understood. Our ongoing research nourished by relationships within and across the social economy research nodes will continue to remap the territory and retell that larger story of *pimâcihowin,* so that colonial expansion and expropriation is not repeated and so that partnerships (including research ones) are equitable in outcomes both sustainable and sustaining of the land and its communities in the North.

Endnotes

1. Table 6.1, located between Chapters 6 and 7, contains a full list of the research projects undertaken by the Node.

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CHAPTER 8

Pushing the Boundaries? Community-University Engagement and the British Columbia-Alberta Research Alliance on the Social Economy

Karen Heisler, Mary Beckie and Sean Markey
BALTA, Simon Fraser University and University of Alberta

Social economy research is engaged in a process of continuous evolution and crosses institutional and professional boundaries. As pluralism, reciprocity and social integration are distinguishing features of this sector of the economy (Restakis, 2006) the community-university engagement research model, which emphasizes collaboration and mutual benefit, provides a useful methodological framework for social economy research. Engaged research is particularly advantageous in addressing emerging or complex social issues or social movements, where knowledge on the subject is fragmented, uneven or lacking cohesion into a formalized and easily accessible body of information. The social economy is one such case. Conceptually, the social economy is often considered to be the "third sector," as distinguished from the public and private (for-profit) sectors. The social economy is, however, engaged in a process of continuous evolution and may partner with public and private sectors and, in this way, is founded on the principles of pluralism, reciprocity and social integration (Pearce, 2003; Neamtan, 2009).

The British Columbia-Alberta Research Alliance on the Social Economy (BALTA) was developed as the western regional node of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnership (CSERP). BALTA's definition of the social economy includes those organizations which are animated by the principle of reciprocity for the pursuit of mutual economic or social goals, often through social control of capital. This definition would include all co-operatives and credit unions, non-profit and volunteer organisations, charities and foundations, service associations, community enterprises and social enterprises that use market mechanisms to pursue explicit social objectives. It would also include for-profit businesses, where those businesses share surpluses and benefits with members (and/or the wider community) in a collectively owned structure (e.g., a co-operative). In this definition it would not include those non-profit and voluntary organizations that are entirely grant or donation dependent (though some do include such organizations in their definitions of the social economy).

Unlike the other regional social economy nodes established under CSERP, which align more closely with the model of institutional-based civic engagement, BALTA was initiated and is being coordinated by a community development organization. The Canadian Centre for Community Renewal (CCCR), a community economic development non-profit organization specializing in resources and expertise to support social economy organizations, serves as the coordinating organization for the research alliance. The CCCR executive director holds the position of principal investigator for the research partnership. The leadership of the research partnership by a practitioner organization has had significant impacts on the evolution of BALTA's administrative and governance structures.

In this chapter we examine the nature and effectiveness of the process of community-university engagement in BALTA's practitioner-led approach. This evaluation utilizes data collected through participant surveys, telephone interviews and focus groups for the BALTA monitoring and evaluation process. Analysis reveals this partnership to be a dynamic and evolving process of negotiation between two distinct professional cultures with sometimes conflicting goals and forms of legitimacy. This chapter provides a glimpse of the experiences of academics and practitioners as they tried to negotiate the differences and demands of their professional cultures while also creating a space for genuine engagement. Our purpose is to contribute to understanding of the challenges and potential of community-university engagement to build and mobilize knowledge about emerging and complex social movements.

Engaged Scholarship

Interest in community-university engagement and partnering has been gaining momentum over the past two decades, as part of an evolving discourse on the nature of knowledge, knowledge mobilization, and the role of academic institutions in society. Although relationships between universities and communities have long existed, engaged scholarship represents a partnership that "blends the intellectual assets and questions of the academy with the intellectual expertise and questions of the public" (Holland, 2005, p.11). Contrary to the traditional hierarchical model of knowledge construction, which views academics as "society's primary generators and transmitters of knowledge" (Holland, 2005, p.12), the core elements of engaged scholarship are reciprocity and mutual benefit for both academic scholarship and society (Boyer, 1990, 1996; Holland, 2001; Holland & Ramaley, 2008; McNall et al., 2009). To achieve this, Pearce et al. (2008) identify the need to "break down barriers between academics and practitioners, encouraging mutual respect and building shared approaches" (p. 23).

In Canada, recent changes in federal research funding criteria and growing awareness of the concept and benefits of university-community engagement are beginning to transform the way in which academic institutions interact with the larger community. Canada's three research councils, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, now have funding specifically targeting community-university research projects. Driven in part by the availability of funding support, universities across Canada are adopting and in some cases institutionalizing community engagement, as noted by Hall (2009). Hall adds that although engagement may not be the "only trend in Canada's higher education," it appears to be increasingly significant and it is revitalizing enthusiasm in the concept of universities as a force for "public good" (2009, p. 12).

Knowledge is central to community-university research partnerships and as Foucault reminds us, knowledge is always contested ground (1980). According to Foucault, what constitutes knowledge, what is to be excluded, and who is designated as qualified to know, all involve acts of power. Prins (2006) writes that "because power is embedded in all social relationships, individual actions no matter how well-intentioned, both reflect and alter the power relations among [community-university] partnership members" (2006, p.3). She cites several studies that illustrate how the expert status of academic institutions maintains a stronghold in specific research collaborations, which allows them "intentionally or unintentionally" to influence the research agenda and control resources (Ibid, p.3). However, Stoecker (1999) contends that it is the project initiator who will always retain more power in the research partnership, regardless of whether this position is held by a university or community member. Shragge and Hanley (2006) write that power imbalances can also be supported by existing research funding policies and they suggest the need for changes in policy directions.

There is a tendency to place knowledge into distinct categories and positions of dominance or subordination. But knowledge, whether academic or community/practitioner based, is never discrete, uniform or static. Rather, knowledge emerges out of complex social processes, through "the discontinuous, diffuse and value-bound interactions of different actors and networks; it is a process of both interpretation and negotiation" (Long & Villareal, 1994, p. 49). Therefore, in supporting the view of engaged scholarship as a social contract for democratizing the knowledge process, we argue that it is necessary to acknowledge and examine social context and relations of power in the process of knowledge construction and mobilization. A useful framework for investigating the connections between context, structure and function was developed by Schulz, Israel, & Lantz (2003) and adapted more recently by McNall et al. (2009). In this framework, context (identified as environmental characteristics) is

seen to have a direct influence on the structural characteristics of the partnership, on the way the partnership works, and also on the types of programs or interventions put in place to guide the partnership. McNall et al. list contextual factors which can influence the structural characteristics of the research alliance: prior relationships and motivations of the partners, competing institutional [and professional] demands, and trust and the balance of power (2009, p. 320). Criteria for successful engagement are also identified by McNall et al. (2009) including: shared leadership and resources, two-way communication, participatory decision making and agreed upon problem-solving processes, mutual respect and benefit, flexibility and innovation, and ongoing evaluation. In this investigation of the relationship of context, structure and function in a practitioner-led research alliance, we explore the boundaries and assumptions framing community-university partnerships in Canada, and how these are impacting the effectiveness of engagement within this particular case.

British Columbia-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA)

The BALTA partnership consists of fifty academics and practitioners based in British Columbia and Alberta, as well as nine national and international collaborators and over seventy student research assistants. In addition to practitioners from a number of different social economy organizations, the academics involved represent a range of social science disciplines.

From the beginning, proponents of the BALTA partnership were motivated to create a model of engagement that was genuinely collaborative and would generate both theoretical and practical knowledge about the social economy.

> In BALTA's case, the model is at least as important as the specific research that is implemented. From its inception, the intent has been to develop a platform for social economy research that is jointly conceived and prioritized by both practitioners and academics and that addresses the needs of both groups (BALTA, 2008, p. 1).

The structure of BALTA was developed to be consistent with a collaborative model of engagement that could meet the objectives identified for the partnership:

1. To create an effective network of academics, researchers, and social economy partners in order to sustain the kind of long-term knowledge production and exchange necessary to strengthen and grow the social economy for many years to come;
2. To understand better the scope and characteristics of the social economy in the region - and to contribute to designing measures for tracking its progress;

3. To assess and better understand exemplary practices, both within and outside the region, and analyze the requirements for their replication and/or scaling up in the region;
4. To speed the exploitation of knowledge about these exemplary practices in and between both provinces; and
5. To contribute to the design and development of the social economy infrastructure in B.C. and Alberta - especially to contribute to defining and promoting policy and regulatory changes and other infrastructure that will support the growth of the social economy (BALTA, 2008, p. 15).

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funding agreement requires BALTA to conduct ongoing evaluation of their progress in meeting these objectives. BALTA developed a monitoring and evaluation program which included gathering quantitative and qualitative data for reporting to SSHRC and to gain feedback and suggestions from participants about the development and implementation of the research partnership. Detailed records were collected on the number of participants, types of research outputs and allocation of funds. Feedback was obtained from practitioners and academics by conducting three rounds of telephone or in-person interviews in late 2007 and via two email questionnaires in the spring of 2008 and the fall of 2009. In addition to these activities, feedback from participants was solicited at each BALTA annual planning forum and a special focus group was conducted with student research assistants in early 2008. The results were reported to the BALTA Steering Committee and used to compile information for the mid-term review and report to SSHRC in 2008, and to measure the progress and the success of the partnership to secure continued funding. Table 8.1 provides an outline of the chronological order of BALTA's evaluation program, as part of an overall work plan.

Table 8.1: BALTA Project Timeline and Evaluation Program

Time Period	BALTA Developments	Monitoring & Evaluation
2005	Initial development of proposed BALTA partnership and research program	Initial setting of intended outputs and outcomes
March 2006	BALTA receives five year SSHRC grant and is established	
April 2006 to January 2007	Development of the partnership and its framework – visioning, policy and systems development, etc.	
October 2006	First meeting of the BALTA membership and first planning forum	

January 2007	Second planning forum	
February-May 2007	Development and approval of initial research plans and projects	Development and approval of a basic framework and plan for monitoring and evaluation
March 2007		Initial evaluation of progress and development of Milestone Report to SSHRC
September 2007		Hiring of doctoral student, as assistant evaluation coordinator
Autumn 2007 to Spring 2008	Research projects being implemented	Development of more detailed monitoring and evaluation framework. In-person and phone interviews with BALTA members in late 2007 as first stage of evaluation of the partnership development
January 2008	Third planning forum	
February 2008		Evaluation focus group with BALTA student researchers
February-May 2008	Development and approval of second annual research plans and projects	
May-June 2008		Email survey of BALTA members to update evaluation of the partnership development and assess research results to date
July-September 2008	Further research projects being initiated	Mid-Term evaluation of BALTA and development of Mid-Term Report to SSHRC
November 2008	First BALTA symposium to present research results	
March-May 2009	Development and approval of third annual research plans and projects	
Summer-Autumn 2009	Further research projects being initiated	Email survey of BALTA members in Autumn to update evaluation of the partnership development and assess research results to date

November 2009	Second BALTA symposium to present research results. BALTA membership endorses exploration of options for continuing BALTA beyond the current SSHRC grant	
February-April 2010	Development and approval of fourth annual research plans and projects	
Autumn 2010	Approval given to explore models for continuing BALTA and development of a new funding proposal to SSHRC	

Drawing upon the findings of this evaluation process, we explore the dynamics of the BALTA research partnership and the convergence of two professional cultures, in order to contribute to a greater understanding of the process of engagement in a practitioner-led community-university research project.

Framing the Partnership

The structure of BALTA was developed to be consistent with a collaborative model of engagement that could meet the objectives identified for the partnership. This structure has been defined and shaped by the dynamic relationships formed amongst the stakeholders: the funding agency (SSHRC), the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal (CCCR) serving as lead coordinating organization, academics, and practitioners.

The principal investigator is responsible for the overall management of the research partnership,

> While the Principal Investigator is committed to sharing responsibility and decision-making authority, it needs to be recognized that the Lead Applicant, under the terms of SSHRC's funding, has final say on BALTA decisions and can veto or refuse to implement any decision that, in his opinion, would present a risk to himself or CCCR (BALTA, 2007, p. 18).

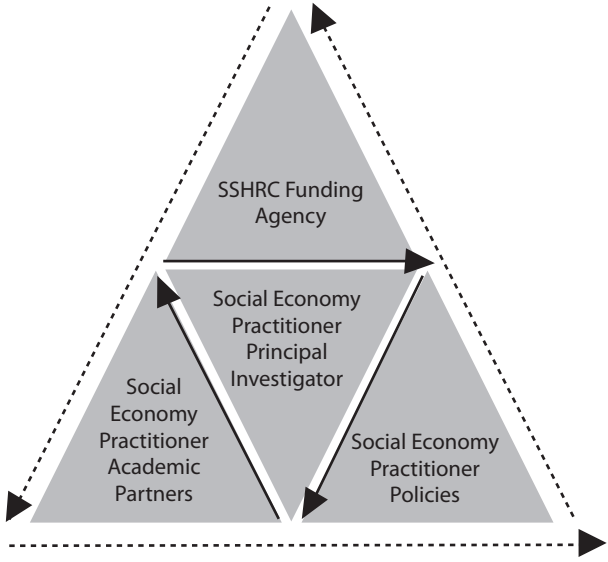
The central role played by the principal investigator is significant in this practitioner-university partnership. The funding relationship with SSHRC, presented a terrain of policies and regulations that was familiar to the academic community but was unfamiliar to the principal investigator and the contracted BALTA coordinator, both social economy practitioners.

We identified a series of relationships at work within the BALTA, which contributed to structure and function of the research partnership. Some of these relationships can be viewed as external to the actual research partnership

between academics and practitioners, while other relationships are more central or internal to the partnership, as shown in Figure 8.1. At the top of the diagram is the vertical level of engagement formed by the administrative relationship that takes place between SSHRC and CCCR. This is a hierarchical relationship which defines the funding context within which the BALTA research partnership must function and the guidelines of which it must conform to, but is viewed as being external to the daily workings of the research partnership. Beneath this level is the internal and horizontal level of engagement formed between CCCR and the practitioners and academics, as well as the relationships forged between individual research partners. CCCR, serving as the coordinating organization for BALTA and holding the position of principal investigator, is responsible for managing the research based on the terms and requirements of the funding agreement. CCCR also facilitates and mediates the relationships between the academics and practitioners in order to establish and maintain a collaborative research partnership.

The internal process of engagement is represented by the solid line arrows. In addition to the internal engagement dynamics there are external engagement dynamics that are impacting the research partnership represented by the dashed line of arrows. This is the structure created by the funding agency policies creating a second layer of dynamics that we have called the external process of engagement.

Figure 8.1: BALTA External and Internal Process Engagement



The External Process of Engagement

The external process of engagement consists of the research policies, relationships and professional cultures that exist outside of the research partnership but have a significant influence over how BALTA is structured and functions. The context of the application of SSHRC funding policies, in particular, has played a key role in shaping the roles and responsibilities of academic practitioner partners.

Despite receiving project approval by SSHRC for five years of funding, CCCR encountered considerable challenges navigating through the terms, conditions and administrative requirements needed to get the project up and running. As a community development organization without academic status or previous SSHRC contract experience, CCCR had to be approved by SSHRC as the administrative body for the project (BALTA, 2008). While awaiting SSHRC's decision, BALTA demonstrated flexibility and innovation by entering into an administrative partnership with Royal Roads University, which had SSHRC approval. This co-administrative relationship allowed BALTA to move forward with planning the research partnership by having the funds channeled through the university to BALTA. As part of this arrangement, an academic co-principal investigator position was established in BALTA for a faculty member from the partnering university.

In 2008, following two years of deliberation by SSHRC, CCCR withdrew its application and has continued with the co-administrative arrangement with Royal Roads University. The academic co-principal investigator position has since been dissolved and the executive director of CCCR has resumed the role of the principal investigator. In essence, this arrangement has enabled BALTA to run its own administrative duties with the assistance of a project manager, under the supervision of the steering committee and the principal investigator, with funding from SSHRC being directed through the partnering university (BALTA, 2008).

The second external process of engagement that surrounds the BALTA collaborative platform is the established professional cultures and networks of both the practitioners and the academics. As the leading government funding agency for social science research in Canada, many of the academic partners have an established history of working within SSHRC's funding framework and have a shared professional culture of knowledge with the organization. This relationship occurs outside of BALTA and is not mediated by the lead administrative organization. Practitioners, however, did not have a prior relationship with or professional knowledge of SSHRC's academic funding policies, thus their relationship with SSHRC has been mediated through CCCR.

As will be discussed below, these external relationships between the funding policies and professional cultures have significantly influenced how BALTA has engaged in the community-university research process. CCCR and the BALTA steering committee have had to navigate these external challenges and move toward creating a successful collaborative research partnership.

The Internal Process of Engagement

Horizontal collaborations amongst CCCR, academics and practitioners occur within the internal or core of the BALTA research partnership. These relationships also influence the structure and function of the BALTA research alliance but in a more direct and immediate way than the external relationships described above. The collaborative university-community partnership was created to identify research that would be strong in both theoretical exploration and practical results. To achieve this, BALTA adopted a governance structure that is based on shared leadership and participatory decision-making and has equitable representation by academics and practitioners. It is comprised of a steering committee, the central governance body, of which the principal investigator is the Chair, and three thematically defined social economy research clusters (SERCs).

The steering committee consists of equal representation of practitioners and academics. Similar to a board of directors, it is responsible for setting the general directions of the research, establishing policies in line with SSHRC guidelines, and approving research proposals submitted from the SERCs. The composition of the steering committee is to ensure equitable and participatory decision-making by representative research partners. This committee and CCCR, as the primary administrative body, are held responsible for transparency and accountability to SSHRC and the BALTA research alliance as a whole.

All research members of BALTA are identified with one of the following three SERCs: SERC 1: Human Services and Affordable Housing; SERC 2: Rural Revitalization and Development; and SERC 3: Analysis, Evaluation and Infrastructure Development. The SERCs are composed of varying numbers of academic and practitioner partners. The role of individual members is to propose and supervise the implementation of the research projects. Each SERC is chaired by an academic and a practitioner. The academic-practitioner co-chairing was an adaptation to the SERC structure introduced in 2008 to ensure the involvement of practitioners in the research projects. The research projects undertaken by the SERCs are listed in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: BALTA Research Projects

SERC 1: Human Services and Affordable Housing
A1-2007 Innovative Use of Housing Co-operative Assets
A2-2007 Co-operative Models of Social Care
A3-2007 The Social Purpose Capital Market in B.C. and Alberta
A4-2007 Role of Faith Based Organizations in the Social Economy (2-Phase Project – See also A10)
A5-2008 Affordable Housing Assessment and Strategic Planning, Kootenay Region
A6 -2009 The Fraser Valley social economy with reference to affordable housing provision and related support services
A7-2009 Co-op Housing Futures: A Spatial Design Research Approach
A8-2009 Creating a Database of Social Enterprise Capital Providers in BC and Alberta
A9-2009 Affordable Housing: Sustainable Management of Housing by Not-for-Profits and Co-ops
A10-2009 Role of Faith Based Organizations in the Social Economy – Phase 2 – The Role of Catholic Religious Orders and the Mennonite Community
A11-2010 Success Factors for Recently Incorporated BC and Alberta Co-operatives
A12-2010 Rural Seniors Housing Needs in the West Kootenay Boundary Region
SERC 2: Rural Revitalization and Development
B1-2007 Understanding the Role of the Social Economy in Advancing Rural Revitalization and Development
B2-2007 Sustainability and the Social Economy
B3 Sustainability, Heritage Conservation & Sheltering the Social Economy
B4 Social Economy Case Studies in Rural Alberta: Participatory Research with Mexican and Albertan Undergraduate Students
B5–2008 Farmers' Markets as Social Economy Drivers of Local Food Systems
B6-2009 Prospects for Socializing the Green Economy: The Case of Renewable Energy
B7-2009 Farmers' Markets as Social Economy Drivers of local Food Systems: Phase 2
B8-2009 Social Economizing Sustainability
SERC 3: Analysis, Evaluation and Infrastructure Development
C1-2007 Summary of Quebec Policies that are Supportive of the Social Economy
C2-2007 NS Co-op Development System Case Study: Phase 1
C4-2007 Preliminary Profile of the Size and Scope of the Social Economy in AB and BC
C5-2007 From Social Economy to Solidarity Economy: Changing Perspectives in a Volatile World - Phase 1
C6-2007 From Social Economy to Solidarity Economy: Changing Perspectives in a Volatile World - Phase 2

C7-2007 NS Co-op Development System Case Study; Phase 2: Analysis of Application in BC and AB
C9-2007 CED and Social Economy Policy Inventory in BC and AB; Phase 1
C10-2007 Municipal Government Support of the Social Economy Sector
C11-2007 Credit Unions as a Financing Source for the Social Economy
C13-2008 Return on Taxpayer Investment for Training Businesses
C14-2008 Leadership in the Community Sector: Understanding the Challenges, Competencies and Needs of Practitioners in the Social Economy
C15-2008 Taking Social Embeddedness into Account in Monitoring the State of the Social Economy and Community Resilience
C16-2009 Survey of Social Enterprises in Alberta and British Columbia
C17-2009 Building a Supportive Environment for Social Enterprise: Synthesis of SERC 3 Research
C18-2009 Procurement Policy & Market Development for the Social Economy: Expanding Market Opportunities for Social Enterprise, Co-operatives, and Other Social Economy Businesses
'Cross Cutting' Collaborative Projects of SERC 1, 2, 3
D1-2006 Literature Reviews for SERC 1; 2 & 3 Themes
D2-2007 Leveraging Social Ownership of Proprietary Goods and Services related to the Golden Mussel to Expand Social Enterprise in Coastal BC Aboriginal Communities
D3-2008 Land Tenure and the Social Economy
D4-2008 Sustainable Infrastructure for the Social Economy: Cluster-based Social Enterprise Models
D5-2008 Credit Unions as a Financing Source for the Social Economy and Rural Community Re-investment
D6-2009 Foundations for the Social Economy
D7-2009 Land Tenure and the Social Economy – Phase 2
D8-2009 Credit Unions and Rural Reinvestment – Phase B
D10-2009 Advancing the Social Economy Through Networks and Collaboration
D11-2010 The Role of Social Enterprise in Employment Services in the British Columbia Context
E1-2007 Mapping Framework Development
E2-2007 Mapping the Social Economy in AB and BC - Phase 1
E3 Mapping the Social Economy from the Ground Up: Urban Neighbourhood/Rural Community Case Study
BALTA Mapping 2009-2010 Survey, Survey Analysis, and Data Archiving

From Planning to Implementation: The Challenges of Collaboration

To realize BALTA's objective of creating a robust research network, three research forums, facilitated by the principle investigator, were conducted between 2006-2008 to identify shared objectives between the practitioners and academics and to design and assess the ongoing research program for each social economy research cluster. The development of the BALTA research program evolved with each forum as new researchers joined the partnership. Feedback from early forum evaluations and interviews with research partners, reflect concern about the lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities and the overall direction of the program.

> Principles of working together need to be defined... there needs to be some clearly articulated game plan with goals, actions and to do items with roles and responsibilities identified and people taking ownership (BALTA Participant, 2007).

Responses from participants' interviewed in the year following, however, reflected a general optimism for the research alliance.

> There has been a high degree of respect between both groups and a recognition of skills and interests, high level of commitment and an increased understanding of the needs and expertise and methods...Really good, starting to come together, respecting the differences between the partners and the different goals that each group has for participating (BALTA Participant, 2008).

In general, participants expressed a commitment to converging the shared interests and expertise of the practical "on-the-ground" expertise of social economy practitioners with the theoretical foundations of academic research. What facilitated this change in attitude was a growing level of trust and mutual respect which was developed through individuals communicating and working together. The sharing of leadership and resources was also viewed as fundamental to forming equitable partnerships.

> There have been challenges in the early stages in understanding the perspectives and realities of each culture – practitioner and academic – and forging a strategic common perspective and agenda, but learning has occurred and the general assessment was that the second planning cycle, culminating in the recent approval of 2008-2009 research plans, has exhibited a much stronger strategic analysis and united perspective. A greater number of projects are also being co-led by both an academic and a practitioner (BALTA, 2008, p. 2).

This general early optimism was tempered however by a growing frustration with the structure of the research clusters and the roles and responsibilities of practitioners, academics and research assistants on individual research projects. As will be discussed in the following sections, one of the greatest challenges BALTA has encountered in implementing the research alliance is the lack of practitioner participation in the implementation of research projects. These challenges provide a context for exploring the process of engagement between these two professional cultures attempting to identify shared interests and shared objectives in designing and implementing an equitable partnership. Feedback from participants clearly shows how both external and internal relationships have impacted the building and implementation of the collaborative research partnership.

As BALTA moved from the planning phase of the research program into project implementation, new challenges emerged as the collaborative research platform was tested. Four thematic challenges emerged from the monitoring and evaluation research: clarity about roles and responsibilities; a lack of engagement of all partners; concern over methodology and research quality; and the production of results from research projects.

Clarity and understanding of roles and responsibilities was a primary theme throughout all the meeting evaluations, participant interviews and the student focus group. Although policy documents exist (Terms of Reference for BALTA Participants, Milestone Report Appendix A), defining the scope of various roles and their associated responsibilities, the overall confusion of "who is supposed to be doing what?" was one of the most commonly referenced criticisms of the BALTA partnership. The original structure of the SERCs identified two co-chairs for each cluster and nine to twelve research partners for each cluster. Two of the three clusters were chaired by two practitioners and the third was chaired by two academics. The ratio of practitioners and academics varied significantly between the three clusters, from an equal number of practitioners and academics in SERC 1, to two practitioners and nine academics in SERC 2, and nine practitioners and two academics in SERC 3. This proved to be challenging in the early stages of project identification and implementation: "there has been a disconnect between the SERC and starting on the projects ... and an understanding of roles between the academic leads and the community partners" (BALTA Participant, 2007). The uneven distribution of academics and practitioners in each research cluster was hindered by external SSHRC policies that prevent practitioners from being compensated for their time dedicated to BALTA. This internal challenge was addressed by the steering committee by recruiting and redistributing practitioners and academics more evenly throughout the SERCs.

It became clear that our initial cadre of co-investigators and collaborators, both academic and practitioner, did not include a

> sufficient number of people with capacity to lead research projects and supervise students. We have recruited new members with such capacity, mainly academics but also some practitioners with research experience (BALTA, 2008, p. 2).

This created a greater balance of academics and practitioners and was part of an overall strategy to improve the functioning of the research clusters. When partners were asked the following year if they had experienced any significant changes in the functioning of the research clusters most respondents noted an improvement in communication and organization. These structural changes have not, however, completely resolved the challenge of achieving equal participation in research projects.

Second, it was widely acknowledged by all members that the major obstacle to practitioners fully engaging with BALTA has been the SSHRC funding policy that restricts direct compensation of practitioner involvement in BALTA. This policy therefore presents a dilemma for practitioners wanting to be fully involved in BALTA research, yet at the same time must fulfill their responsibilities as paid staff in community organizations. With the exception of the principle investigator, SSHRC's funding polices prevent BALTA from funding release time for non-academic organizations or for hiring research assistants unless they are registered university students proved cumbersome and largely inappropriate for community-based researchers. The following comments reflect the frustration of the participants over this issue.

> A systematic challenge from the beginning is the structure of the SSHRC funding – it is supposed to be a community and academic program but there is only funding to pay for the academics and students, if we want to have someone from the community participate they have to do it for free (BALTA Participant, 2007).

> But it isn't working related to how SSHRC has set up how the funding is distributed, there is zero incentive for the practitioners to participate because they cannot be compensated for their work and other priorities end up taken precedence. (BALTA Participant, 2007)

This prompted one participant to suggest changes in funding policies so as to be more aligned with the goal of equal participation by academics and practitioners in engaged research projects.

> We find that many long established SSHRC policies – for example with respect to funding of community based researchers – hinder the realization of the vision. We have

> continued to evolve strategies to deal with this challenge, but would strongly encourage SSHRC to consider how to better tailor its' operational and financial policies to the aim of effective community-university research collaboration" (BALTA, 2007, p. 1).

The current policy structure has resulted in the majority of research being conducted by the academic partners and student research assistants. Practitioners report that most of their time dedicated to BALTA has been focused on the identification and design of research projects, with little time and effort afforded for project implementation. This brings into question the expectations for equal participation during the engagement process and speaks to the need for deeper analysis of the roles and responsibilities of research partners.

Third, one of the key challenges experienced by academic partners is balancing the professional needs and interests of the community partners with their own professional mandate of ensuring academic research standards. These different and sometimes conflicting agendas have impacted at times on the effectiveness of leadership within the SERCs and the project teams, and consequently the timely completion of some projects. As mentioned previously, most of the research has been carried out by under-graduate and graduate student research assistants, mainly under the supervision of academic partners. For students without a background in the social economy, it has been challenging getting up to speed on the subject and meeting research expectations within the identified timeframe. Particularly during some of the early research projects, the students reported they were not receiving adequate guidance and support from project supervisors in order to fulfill their research tasks effectively. This led to a revamping of how research assistants were recruited and supervised to ensure that the projects are completed with the necessary academic rigor and also within the contracted timeframe. Changes in student hiring also included longer contracts and the establishment of an academic and a practitioner co-lead for each project to ensure adequate supervision of research activities (BALTA, 2008). Involvement of practitioners to research supervision was consistent with the effort to reduce the gap in practitioner participation in the implementation phase.

A final concern was raised by both academics and practitioners about the overall integration and integrity of the BALTA research program.

> We are also nearing the end of the project and attempts at synthesis seem weak. My fear is that at the end of BALTA we will end up with a bunch of fragmented stuff that will have little strategic, practical, or academic value. It will be a website that simply and very quickly becomes out of date (BALTA Participant, 2009).

For BALTA to reach its research objectives there is a need to synthesize and present the research findings in formats accessible to both academic and practitioner audiences. The relatively low productivity rate in early stages of the project needed to be improved if the BALTA collaborative research partnership was to be considered successful in advancing and mobilizing knowledge about the social economy in western Canada. In the 2008 mid-term review SSHRC commended BALTA on the collaborative research network it was developing but concerns were raised about how effective the partnership was in generating research outputs. Prior to the mid-term review there was a concerted effort to produce and mobilize research results to a broad audience. This did result in an increase in the number of academic papers presented at conferences and practitioner-oriented discussion papers, but there were only a small number of articles submitted to academic peer-reviewed journals. In the final year of BALTA funding, efforts will be focusing on the completion of research projects with targeted outputs for both practitioners (e.g., reports, web-site development, resource tools) and academics (e.g., journal articles, book projects, curriculum). This reflects the desire to meet academic and SSHRC expectations for academic outputs, while also addressing the needs of practitioner partners.

Lessons Learned

In this chapter, we have identified and described key internal and external relationships which have defined and influenced the structure and process of engagement in BALTA. This case study raises important questions concerning the disconnect between the goals of engaged scholarship and the realities of institutional funding policies, as well as the collaboration of two professional spheres with different and sometimes conflicting objectives and methodologies. Canada's research councils' commitment to funding university-community research partnerships has created a significant and timely opportunity for academics and practitioners to work together on important social issues and learn from each other's methodologies and expertise. The partnerships have great potential to enrich both professional spheres, and in the case of BALTA, to help build greater understanding of the social economy in Canada. However, the BALTA experience reveals that there can be significant obstacles to actualizing the ideal of truly collaborative and engaged scholarship.

First, our research shows that restrictive funding policies can limit participation of practitioner research partners, which in turn impacts on the equitable contribution of time and effort that partners can dedicate to the design and implementation of the research program. Funding arrangements thus created a power imbalance within the internal dynamics of the partnership (Shragge et al., 2006). As part of their job description, academics are able to dedicate time to research and are also able to expand their involvement through access to SSHRC "release" [from teaching] funding. Although efforts were made in BALTA to

maintain a structural balance of academics and practitioners within the SERCs, the involvement of practitioners was limited by their difficulty in accessing SSHRC "release" funding in addition to the fact that research was not built into most community participants' job descriptions and work time commitments. Given these conditions, this type of research partnership severely limits the capacity for the direct engagement of practitioners in the implementation phase.

Second, this research reveals that the dynamics of external and internal relationships impacts the process of engagement. The unique challenges of BALTA associated with its practitioner-led partnership model underlines the need for continued exploration of not only why engagement is important but also how the process of engagement works in its various forms. The leadership of BALTA by a social economy organization significantly impacted on the evolution of BALTA's administrative and governance structures. Although community partners are eligible to lead research programs, they need to undergo a rigorous approval process by SSHRC, which in the case of BALTA significantly impeded progress in the initial phase and required innovative structural adjustments. Hence, this case demonstrates that context and relations of power need to be acknowledged and taken into account if engaged scholarship is to truly fulfill the potential for equal participation and mutual benefit (Prins, 2006).

Third, forming a research partnership between two professional cultures with different methodologies and goals is challenging. Common interests may bring the partnership together, but as the BALTA experience indicates, a good deal of time and effort is required to ensure that the research partnership is structured in a way that is sensitive to the context, needs and objectives of all participants. It is also important to recognize the value and to incorporate the contributions of different participants, for example the formal research expertise of academics with the local knowledge, contacts, and mobilization strengths of practitioners.

Conclusion

This study moves the discourse beyond conventional structures and relations of power that are characteristic of institution-based civic engagement processes, to an examination of the impacts of context, structure and function in a practitioner-led research alliance. We support the view that there is a need to "break down barriers between academics and practitioners, encouraging mutual respect and building shared approaches" (Pearce et al., 2008, p. 23), but contend that changes in funding policies and in the assumptions about research partners' participation, roles and responsibilities would help to enable truly engaged and collaborative scholarship. We argue that funding agencies, academic institutions and community organizations need to realize the value of engaged scholarship by working together to create more concrete and equitable forms of support

and engagement. Existing barriers and boundaries of effective co-creation and mobilization of knowledge in the BALTA experience highlight the critical importance of recognizing and examining the diversity of research partnerships forming under the rubric of engaged scholarship. For BALTA, the next challenge will lie in sustaining the social economy research partnership beyond the end of the SSHRC funding. The momentum created through the collaboration has led to a desire to create a social economy research network to continue to share resources and expertise.

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CHAPTER 9

Researching the Social Economy in Canada's North: Reflections on the Node Partnerships and Processes

Chris Southcott, Valoree Walker, David Natcher, Jennifer Alsop,
Tobi Jeans and Nicholas Falvo
Northern Node of the Social Economy

The Northern Node of the Canadian Social Economy networks has experienced a great deal of success in both conducting research on the social economy in the region and in bringing researchers and social economy organizations closer together. At the same time, it has experienced a series of challenges – most of which are related to the unique social, economic, and cultural conditions existing in the region. The North as outlined for the Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada (SERNNoCa) includes the Yukon, Northwest Territories (NWT), Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador. This large geographic study area has a very diverse population with many different cultural groups and languages. Such a vast regional span poses challenges for operating as a research network of the Social Economy Suite. There is a broad range of research interests across the regions. A unique environment exists in the three northern Territories where rules and regulations must be followed for the conduct of research. The relationship between researchers and communities in the North has evolved over the years so that meaningful partnerships are being developed but past colonial experiences remain in the memory of the population. The dominance of the resource sector and the importance of the traditional activities of the region's indigenous communities have all had an impact on the development of the Northern Node.

In the North there are requirements and considerations for conducting research with legislation and procedures in place that researchers must comply with in a particular jurisdiction. A research licence must be obtained in order to conduct research in the Yukon, NWT or Nunavut. The research licence is part of a process to ensure that communities are consulted, partnerships negotiated, training opportunities determined and information is shared throughout the research process in a way that is relevant and useful. The North has undergone significant changes in the political and administrative realms with the settlement and implementation of comprehensive land claim and self government agreements. This shift in political power from the Canadian federal government to self governing First Nations and Inuit provides them with more input and direct involvement in what happens in their region and communities.

When SERNNoCa began there was a clear understanding by the network of the need for community partnerships and what this involved. The structure of SERNNoCa has facilitated the development of partnerships in the North. To ensure the operations of the network were from the North and for the North, a full time coordinator position was established at the Northern Research Institute of Yukon College in Whitehorse, Yukon. In addition to this, 2 part-time coordinator positions were established in the NWT and Nunavut to facilitate close connections and partnership opportunities for social economy and other organizations in the North. The SERNNoCa network established a number of research partnerships with projects having community input and direction throughout the North. Some examples of the process, challenges and successes are provided in this paper.

A wide range of research projects were conducted through SERNNoCa, providing an understanding of the type and operation of the northern social economy and highlighting the unique context of the North. A list of the research projects of SERNNoCa is provided in Table 9.1 at the end of this chapter. There were a number of research projects with clear community partnerships, while others did not have specific partnerships but examined various existing data sets or involved the collection of data from a wide range of groups, as was the case for the portraiture work. The network created a new awareness of this sector and its operations in the North. It also brought to light the challenges and limitations that some organizations face in their operations. The northern workshop events brought together a wide range of organizations and facilitated discussions with governments to try and find solutions to the challenges of the northern social economy. There was clear evidence of a lack of policy and core funding to support the groups.

The research demonstrated that there are unique considerations in northern regions for the social economy. Many of these differences relate to numerous northern communities that have large Aboriginal population and a social economy that is characterized by the harvest and use of traditional foods and resources. As such, research into the "mixed economy" was an important consideration of SERNNoCa's research program. The mixed economy is one that combines both wage economy and traditional harvesting and sharing activities. The research examined the contribution of subsistence vs wage economies, demonstrating the importance of harvesting and distribution of wild foods and resources as a main area of the northern social economy.

The unique nature of the northern social economy is also found in the study of co-operatives (co-ops) in communities of Nunavut and NWT. Most of the co-ops in these two territories are a part of a large network known as Arctic Co-operatives. These co-ops are multi-purpose businesses owned and controlled by the Inuit and Dene and they provide a wide range of services to their members

and communities, such as retail stores, hotel and tourism operations, cable television, art and craft marketing, fuel distribution, heavy equipment services, and property rental. These co-ops provide employment for many northern people and are a significant player in local community economic development.

Within the northern regions, differences were observed between the social economy situation of smaller, remote, and predominantly Aboriginal communities, those that are dependent on resource development and that of the major regional service centres. Yet alongside these differences exist a number of similarities, even between social economy groups in the North and their counterparts in the South. For example, the traditional economy is found to closely resemble operations of social economy organizations that serve social or cultural purposes rather than for-profit. In addition, larger northern cities are often home to a variety of non-profit groups, voluntary organizations and social enterprises that are connected to larger social economy operations in the Provinces. This is the case for groups such as Make a Wish Foundation of BC and Yukon, or the Alberta/NWT division of the Canadian Cancer Society. Thus, the research projects undertaken by SERNNoCa highlight the complexity of the social economy of the North by looking at its unique characteristics, as well as its connections to similar groups in southern Canada.

Social Economy Research Network in the North

The Northern Node's proposal to SSHRC began with discussions between Chris Southcott and the Directors of the three Research Institutes at each of the Territorial Colleges. It was agreed to establish a network that would have an administrative centre in the North. This model would help to build the research capacity in the North through the northern colleges. The main office and program coordinator would be located at the Northern Research Institute, Yukon College in Whitehorse, Yukon, with sub-node offices based at the Aurora Research Institute, Aurora College in Inuvik, Northwest Territories and the Nunavut Research Institute, Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit, Nunavut. This structure would facilitate communication, research and other supports at a regional level. The original proposal had not included Nunavik (the northern region of Quebec and home to almost 10,000 Inuit) and Labrador (the northerly region of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador) but from the recommendations of the SSHRC review panel these were then added to the Northern Node. The SERNNoCa Steering Committee included a member from Makivik Corporation in Kujjuaaq, Nunavik and also a member from the Labrador Institute in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador. These representatives provided a great deal of support and advice to the SERNNoCa research network and helped to ensure research projects were relevant to these regions.

Yukon College was selected as the site for the administration and overall coordination of SERNNoCa early in the proposal development. The Northern Research Institute office of Yukon College agreed to take this role as Yukon College had already begun to develop policies for research ethics and administration in order to establish eligibility for funding. Yukon College supported the proposal to locate the main office at their institution recognizing that this would be a significant contribution to building their own research capacity in cooperation with the university partners involved. It was felt that Yukon College had the greatest research capacity and supports to administer the program. The Research Director and other team members wanted to see the program administered in the North and were the driving force to ensure that this was a northern operated research program. The research theme coordinators for the Node were selected based on their extensive experience and background working in northern communities and their knowledge in areas relevant to the subject areas that would be examined for the social economy.

Serving as the main site of the program was the first step for Yukon College to develop a dedicated social sciences research facility with the capacity to be a SSHRC eligible institution and support future research initiatives. With this assignment came a host of new requirements for Yukon College but it opened the doors for future research opportunities and developments. This was only possible with the recognition of the value of having the research driven from the North rather than the long existing scenario of all northern research coming from southern Universities.

The main objective of the Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada (SERNNoCa) was to create a network of university/college based researchers and representatives of community-based organizations, operating as partners, to conduct research relevant to the social economy in Canada's North. The research of this network was intended to help develop social economy capacity in northern communities and improve performance of organizations and enterprises in areas important to the social economy in Canada's North. To this end, a network steering committee was established with broad representation from universities, northern colleges and other northern research institutes and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed to guide the work of the Node. This was to ensure that the work would address the goals set out in the proposal.

In following the requirements for doing research in the North, SERNNoCa also looked for ways to ensure the development of research capacity and training opportunities for northern students through their participation in research projects. The proposal to SSHRC outlined a number of goals and objectives to be achieved in the 5 year research program. As with any initiative, researchers were faced with challenges as their research ideas and projects began to take shape.

Doing research in Canada's North has unique challenges and opportunities for the study of the social economy. The social economy was a term rarely used by most northern researchers in the network and as such many needed to become more familiar with the subject area and develop an understanding of how the northern context was similar or different from what exists in other parts of Canada. In the North, social change has occurred very rapidly over the past 50 years and communities must find mechanisms to deal with the new demands and challenges they are facing. From this point of view the social economy offers alternative ways of sustainable community development. While few in the North had heard of the social economy, in examining the types of operations that already exist it was evident that the ideas and structures in place were closely aligned to what others define as social economy operations. One objective of our research node in the North was to provide a better understanding of how the social economy functions in a variety of social conditions and provide individuals and groups with information on this.

Research Requirements

There are special requirements in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon for the proper conduct of research. In order to conduct research in Canada's North researchers must have the proper licences and/or permits as well as other approvals that may be required. Regulatory processes have been established to ensure protection of the environment, the people, culture, historic sites and artefacts. The licences and permits are administered under territorial, federal and land claim legislation. The processes provide a way to ensure that people in the North can be involved with research in a more collaborative manner and communities are kept informed of these activities, and understand the results and potential benefits that research may provide.

The Yukon *Scientists and Explorers Act* (2002) requires that any person who enters the Yukon to undertake scientific research obtain a license from the Yukon Government. The purpose of the Act is to keep the Yukon government informed of research being done in the territory, to ensure that the Yukon benefits by receiving reports and research results and that the research will not cause undue social or environmental harm. If the project involves Yukon residents as subjects or informants, written confirmation is required to show that the project has been discussed with the affected communities, First Nations, residents and other groups and that any required approvals/consent has been received. The use of traditional knowledge and oral histories is addressed in specific First Nations protocols and the affected First Nation should be contacted for guidance and requirements. It is recommended that two to three months be given for consultation. Licence conditions require the submission of an interim and final report for the research. There are also requirements for approvals and permits based on the type of research being conducted. The Yukon requirements are

detailed in the *Guidebook on Scientific Research* in the Yukon which is available online. Some of the Yukon First Nations have established research application and review processes. For example the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN) have established a research application assessment and liaison service through the VGFN Heritage Branch. They review all research licence applications in their traditional territory. If the research is deemed to be in an area sensitive to the First Nation, then a VGFN application form is required. If researchers are interested in accessing oral history or traditional knowledge documented by the First Nation then an Access Application is required. This application is reviewed by the VGFN Heritage Committee who determine if the application is approved and if there are to be any special restrictions on the project. Approved applicants sign a letter of agreement regarding the special restrictions for their project.

A booklet to assist Yukon First Nations communities in ensuring that research is conducted ethically and according to community values has been developed through joint efforts of the Arctic Health Research Network-Yukon and the Yukon First Nations Health and Social Commission (Van Bibber et al., 2008). These principles, guidelines and tools have been developed to provide guidance with understanding research processes and to aid the review of research plans. As stated in the booklet, research development within Yukon First Nations communities involves the review of requests and proposals, generating research questions, guiding research projects and participation in all stages of the research. Researchers work in partnership with communities to create research that is translated into practice and builds northern research capacity providing a range of benefits for people, families and communities.

All research done in the Northwest Territories (NWT) requires a license. This includes work in indigenous knowledge as well as in the physical, social and biological sciences. Through the licensing process, information is shared with other researchers and northern residents. Summaries of research conducted each year are distributed to media, community organizations and other researchers. In addition, research information is added to existing and developing scientific databases. Any social sciences research project requires a scientific research licence. This is obtained through the Aurora Research Institute in Inuvik in accordance with the NWT Scientist Act. Part of the requirements for the license is community consultation. Through the online research licence application process several of the regional agencies are notified of the research automatically. Community consultation is a vital part of the licensing procedure but also essential in developing a meaningful research partnership. If the project involves NWT residents as subjects or informants then written confirmation of community/agency support is required for the licensing process. It is recommended that consultation begin at least 3 months prior to when the licence is required. Researchers must consult with and gain approval from the appropriate community organizations before a Scientific Research License will be

issued. A complete guide for research in the Northwest Territories outlining the details and requirements for the NWT process are available through the Aurora Research Institute website.

In order to do research in Nunavut a licence or permit is required in compliance with the Scientist Act and is administered through the Nunavut Research Institute in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Researchers intending to work in Nunavut need to initiate the licensing process several months prior to starting their research. Researchers are strongly encouraged to discuss their research plans with Nunavut community authorities and other local and regional agencies who may be affected and or interested in the proposed study. Researchers need to incorporate feedback and suggestions from local and regional groups that will be involved in the projects. Some areas that should be discussed with community partners during the development of a research project include:

- What types of direct and indirect benefits could the research have for community members and agencies?
- How best can community members be involved in the design, data collection, analysis and reporting stages of the research?
- What services and supports are required for the project from the communities?

To assist with engaging and communicating effectively with communities when doing research, a guide for researchers was prepared by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute entitled *Negotiating Research Relationships with Inuit Communities: A Guide for Researchers.* This guide addresses many of the key questions of researchers who are now aware of the need to ensure northern communities are involved in and benefit from research. How can community members participate meaningfully in research? What level of community involvement is appropriate for a given project? What are the best ways to communicate with local people? How can researchers initiate and maintain a meaningful relationship with community members? This guide was intended to assist researchers working with Canadian Inuit communities in the regions of Nunavut, Nunavik, Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the NWT, and Nunatsiavut (Labrador) but also provides guidelines that apply to First Nations and Métis Settlements. It was written as a follow-up and complement to the 1998 joint Nunavut Research Institute/Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami booklet entitled *Negotiating Research Relationships: A Guide for Communities.*

After consultations have occurred, researchers must then submit an application package to the Nunavut Research Institute. The application is screened to ensure all information is complete before submitting to a review committee. Reviewers include representatives from the municipal councils, hunters and trappers organizations, land claims organizations, Inuit associations,

territorial government departments, institutions of public government (e.g., Nunavut Impact Review Board, Nunavut Planning Commission), district education authorities, as well as other groups who may have an interest in the proposed research. Each reviewer is given approximately 45 days to provide comments to the NRI. Comments are forwarded to the researcher for a response. A licence may be denied if reviewers feel that the project poses a social or environmental threat. In addition to the licensing responsibility, NRI provides further supports and suggestions to facilitate the research process. They play a key role in ensuring that appropriate consultation has occurred and that other logistics for the research are considered. The knowledge and experience of NRI staff enable them to provide essential information for new researchers to the North. In Nunavut, all research licence applications must include a non-technical summary in both English and Inuktitut. NRI provides contacts for these translation requirements.

In Nunavik and Labrador formal research licence processes have not yet been finalized. In Nunavik, researchers are expected to consult with the Makivik Corporation and its Nunavik Research Centre, the Kativik Regional Government or the Nunavik Nutrition and Health Committee, depending on the type of research. The Nunatsiavut Government in Labrador asks that researchers who wish to conduct research in Nunatsiavut contact the Inuit Research Advisor to get the most recent Nunatsiavut Government Research Process document. These guidelines outline the requirements for the research and what is necessary to receive support to conduct research. The Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee meets monthly to review research proposals, in addition to other business. Every researcher must comply with the 15 items listed in the Nunatsiavut Government Research process document.

Assistance with licensing information is available from on-line sources. On the National Aboriginal Health Organization website a section has been created for ethics and research with a series of fact sheets to serve as a reference for research participants on a variety of topics. Fact sheet #8 explains the existing requirements for researchers to conduct research in Inuit regions with maps showing areas and communities covered by regional permit and licensing requirements. Details are given on research-specific requirements and time frames. Fact sheet #9 provides guidelines for research involving Inuit. This gives an overview of existing general and ethical guidelines for research involving Inuit.

As in all regions of Canada, in the North, ethical requirements include the guidelines followed by Canadian universities found in the document Tri-Council Policy Statement: *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.* Universities have ethical review boards and committees to review research plans to ensure that these guidelines are followed. In 1982, the Association of Canadian

Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) published *Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North.* They have become the most widely cited and adopted among northern researchers in Canada. With recent changes in the North and land claim settlements and self-government agreements, the research context changed and communities wanted input into research to address their concerns and establish meaningful roles in the research process. In keeping with the changes occurring in the North, ACUNS revisited their document to make changes that reflected the evolving research environment in the North. A new spirit of partnerships between researchers and northern community groups has changed the dynamic of research and led the way for creating new relationships. ACUNS revised their statement of principles in 2003, recognizing that partnerships must be founded on mutual understanding and trust. The 20 principles that they present in their document "are intended to encourage partnerships between northern peoples and researchers, that, in turn, will promote and enhance northern scholarships" (Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North, ACUNS 2003). Research should be a positive component of the northern social and physical environment so it should be clearly explained, involve northern residents in appropriate ways and conducted ethically with recognized benefits.

For SERNNoCa it was recognized from the beginning that researchers would need to develop partnerships for the research that was required. As part of the process to allocate SERNNoCa funding the research applicants had to demonstrate that community support and involvement was clearly evident for the research. This led to new challenges with SSHRC funding and allocating funding support to community groups. New mechanisms had to be put in place with new community partners being added to the SERNNoCa proposal to allow their meaningful participation in a project. Many of the SERNNoCa projects involved the establishment of community partnerships with a few examples included in this paper to feature these new relationships and the processes required for developing community partnerships.

Example 1: Developing a Portrait of the Social Economy in Northern Canada

One of the key research activities of SERNNoCa is related to developing a portrait of the social economy in northern Canada. The research included creating an initial list, or census, of all social economy organizations and then using this list as a sampling frame for a questionnaire survey. The work spanned all 5 jurisdictions covered by SERNNoCa and as such did not include specific regional partnerships. Consultation and other partnership activities were generally undertaken with the community partners that were members of SERNNoCa's Steering Committee.

As the research included all regions of the North, the portraiture research provided an interesting opportunity to compare the licensing process in each jurisdiction. While working out research arrangements with specific First Nations was a time consuming and sometimes difficult task, in general the licensing process in the Yukon is less onerous than in either the Northwest Territories or Nunavut. It is handled by the territorial government's Department of Tourism and Culture and does not require a very strict community approvals process. As a result, SERNNoCa researchers not working with specific First Nations had fewer difficulties getting a research license than in the other territories.

The research licensing process in the Northwest Territories had a very strict regulatory process and this sometimes presented difficulties for SERNNoCa researchers. While the consulting required as a result of the licensing process is extremely helpful for both researchers and communities, it is time consuming. In addition, high turnover in staff working at the Aurora Research Institute based in Inuvik, Northwest Territories often limit the capacity of that organization to expedite the licensing process. Since research cannot start until the research license has been issued SERNNoCa researchers sometimes had to delay their work. As the licence is only valid for a calendar year and was often not issued until near the end of the year this limited the time for the actual research to be conducted. The process for obtaining a licence for the following year had to begin again with additional delays in the conducting research. The NWT is also the only jurisdiction with a processing fee for the license. This fee is required for each licence even if the same project is done over a number of years. The fee has increased in the last few years and is now just over $150 for each research project and each renewal. To conduct research over a 3 year period is a cost to the research budget of about $500. Researchers learned to start the licensing process as early as possible in order to avoid delays.

While the licensing process in Nunavut is similar to that of the Northwest Territories, SERNNoCa researchers here generally experienced fewer delays. There often appears to be a greater consensus among communities about research issues. In addition, staff at the Nunavut Research Institute have a long history of working with these communities and as such are better able to both advise researchers on potential problems and facilitate solutions to any obstacles that may develop.

As mentioned above, the community research approval process is much more informal in both Nunavik and Labrador. In Nunavik the portraiture research approval process was primarily one of discussions with Makivik Corporation, while in Labrador both the Labrador Institute of Memorial University and the Nunatsiavut Government were consulted. Although the informal nature of this process ensured that there were few logistical obstacles, it also meant that feedback from communities was limited.

Example 2: Subsistence and the Social Economy of Nunatsiavut, Labrador

On December 1, 2005 the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act came into effect. With its ratification, the Nunatsiavut Government was formed and took its place as a regional Inuit government within the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. As a regional government, the Nunatsiavut Government gained administrative authority over a number of key government departments including health, education, justice, culture and language. In addition, it assumed responsibility for all matters relating to the protection, use, and development of renewable and non-renewable resources in the Nunatsiavut settlement region. The Nunatsiavut Government, and more specifically their Department of Lands and Natural Resources, is now responsible for the "sustainable management of Nunatsiavut land and natural resources while maximizing benefits from the development of these resources for Inuit."[1]

An integral component of this Department's mandate is to determine the Inuit Domestic Harvest Levels (IDHL) for 140 different wildlife species and other natural resources used by the Inuit to satisfy their nutritional, cultural and ceremonial needs. Establishing IDHL is necessary in cases where conservation concerns arise over wildlife populations, particularly for migratory species. In cases where conservation concerns arise, Inuit harvesters retain the right to harvest up to the established IDHL. However, in the absence of IDHL being identified, responsibility for setting harvest limits for migratory species falls largely to the discretion of the Federal Government. Recognizing the need to establish IDHL, the Nunatsiavut Government entered into a partnership with SERNNoCa researchers. This work sought to not only quantify the number of wildlife species being harvested by Inuit households but also to examine the social dimensions of wildlife harvesting and the role that wild foods play in maintaining the social, cultural and economic continuity of Nunatsiavut communities.

However, before any research activities were initiated it was decided that a comprehensive research agreement would be developed that would outline the responsibilities and expectations of both SERNNoCa researchers and the Nunatsiavut Government. This included the means by which traditional ecological knowledge would be gathered and disseminated, ownership of intellectual property and authorship of publications. In the agreement it was decided that all data generated from the research would remain the Intellectual Property of the Nunatsiavut Government. Intellectual Property is defined as information, ideas, or other intangibles in their expressed form. It was also agreed that all research carried out under this Agreement could be used by SERNNoCa researchers, with the consultation and approval of the Nunatsiavut Government. In the event of publication, it agreed that joint authorship between SERNNoCa

researchers and representatives of the Nunatsiavut Government would be assigned. Last it was agreed that all research would have a training component that would allow for the transfer of skills from SERNNoCa researchers to community members. This was considered necessary in order to transfer the analytical skills that will be necessary for Nunatsiavut to continue their own research and monitoring programs. Through these training efforts, a cadre of Inuit community-based researchers has been established that is now extending the research to a wide range of other areas. Owing to the success of this research partnership, the Nunatsiavut Government is now using the research agreement as a template as they negotiate arrangements with other researchers working within the Nunatsiavut territory.

Example 3: Food Security and the Cross-Border Dimensions of the Vuntut Gwitchin Social Economy

This project was also coordinated by David Natcher and involved a number of key team members to create a community supported partnership. This involved Tobi Jeans, Masters student, University of Saskatchewan; Norma Kassi and Jody Butler-Walker, Arctic Health Research Network, Yukon; and Glenna Tetlichi, Community Research Assistant, Old Crow, Yukon. This project began with discussions between David Natcher (SERNNoCA Theme 4 Coordinator), Kassi and Butler-Walker. Early discussions determined the research needs and requirements for the community of Old Crow. Kassi is a member of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and was raised and educated in Old Crow. The early discussions and involvement of Kassi were integral to the development of the project in providing firsthand knowledge of the concerns and needs of the community of Old Crow.

Concerns were expressed by community members over how the border crossings have imposed restrictions that affect the harvesting, sharing and receiving of traditional foods amongst the Vuntut Gwitchin. Food security in the North is being threatened by many factors, from climate change to resource availability. This is also the case for traditional foods such as caribou, moose and salmon which are further at risk with changing dietary habits and the high costs of subsistence harvesting. Other researchers have partnered with the Vuntut Gwitchin in studies to identify environmental factors that influence traditional food resources, document traditional food uses, and map changing wildlife patterns. This project examines issues of food security and food sharing amongst the Vuntut Gwitchin across the US-Canada border in relation to the impact of social and political systems. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how traditional food sharing practices are significant considerations in terms of the food security for these people.

The project relied on community participation and involvement. Data was collected in Old Crow through interviews, focus groups and a food sharing survey. To assist this work a local resident was hired as a research assistant and three high school students helped with the survey and interviews. Tobi Jeans resided in the community for the summer months and part of the fall to ensure that community people understood the nature of the research project and the value to the community. The information gathered is intended to benefit the community as a whole. The project aims to generate a set of policy recommendations that will uphold the food sovereignty rights of the Vuntut Gwitchin against the barriers that occur as a result of an imposed border between the US and Canada. In this way, the research team hopes to create a community-based solution to improve the health, nutrition and traditional lifestyle of the Vuntut Gwitchin people.

Involving local residents in the data collection was critical to gaining the trust and support of the community for this project. By living in the community, Tobi Jeans was also able to secure greater community involvement and work closely with community members. This provided sufficient time to get more community members to respond to the survey at times that were convenient to them. As people in remote northern communities often spend a significant time out on the land during the summer months, this flexibility was crucial to the success of the survey. Hiring a local community resident to assist with data collection was also an important factor in community support and understanding of the research

The research team also found that with this type of research, learning from the experiences of the past is an important process. This meant that finding primary sources with firsthand knowledge of the time period when the Alaska/Yukon border was drawn was a challenge. Fortunately, community members have continued to step into the roles their Elders once held, and new storytellers are emerging to fill this space for maintaining the connections with their history and traditions. The importance of the land and networking system that stretches across the border is evident today as it was in the past for the Vuntut Gwitchin.

Communication of the results is an important component of this work and will be provided back to the community once data analysis has been completed. This will involve another trip and additional time with the community members to discuss and verify the information provided. Sufficient time to allow community input is essential to the success of the project.

Example 4: The Role of Cooperative Enterprise in the Social Economy of Repulse Bay, Nunavut

A relatively strong network of co-operatives exists in the North, which over the past 50 or so years has worked together to ensure co-operative success in the region. In doing so, it has played a significant role in the economic development of many isolated northern communities.

A research project was proposed that would aim to better understand the importance of these cooperatives within communities in the North through the mapping of economic activity (wage labour, subsistence activities and government contributions) within the community. To begin research in this area a community partner interested and willing to be involved in the project needed to be determined. The research location was determined through the assistance of Mary Nirlunguyak, from Arctic Co-operatives Ltd. As a result of her work-related travel throughout the North, she is in constant contact with the community board of directors of most northern co-operatives in NWT and NU. Over the course of a few months, she asked a number of these boards whether they would be interested in welcoming a researcher into their community to study the co-operative. The Board of Directors and current manager of Naujat Co-op in Repulse Bay, Nunavut were interested in participating in such a research project. Since the bounds of the research stretched beyond the co-op itself, it was important to get complete community buy-in to the research. Thus, the next step was to obtain the Hamlet council's support of the research. The Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) at the time was very much interested in the research and he presented the idea to the Hamlet council, who gave the project the go-ahead. However as the SAO stepped down several weeks before the arrival of the researcher in the community, the Hamlet council almost forgot that a researcher would arrive. As such, there was some confusion at the start of the project. After the Hamlet agreed in writing to the research, an application was submitted for a Nunavut Research License with the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI). Once the license was approved, ethics approval was obtained through Carleton University.

The field research portion of the project was scheduled for the entire month of August, 2009. After arriving in town, the researcher met the Co-op manager and then slowly began to meet the people of the Hamlet office, as well as the SAO and the Mayor. The researcher inquired about a possible translator/ research partner, and a young woman's name was put forth. This young woman declined the offer for the position, but fortunately her grandmother agreed to help. She was an extremely effective research partner, partly due to her work experience in Repulse Bay over the years, including positions as the Economic Development Officer and the secretary of the local Hunters and Trapper's Organization (HTO). In addition, she was a member of the Elder's Council, and as such, she had close ties to the other elders in town.

One of the first things that the translator/research partner did was to translate a poster to put up around town, which described the nature of the research, what was hoped to accomplished, and how people could become involved. In addition, she helped translate a radio message introducing the researcher and the research to the community. She assisted with compiling a list of elders and harvesters to interview for the project. The researcher tried to speak to a member of every business, community organization, non-profit and government office in town. In addition, a history of the community was developed with the assistance of the Vice-Principal of Tusarvik school in Repulse Bay. He provided a copy of a transcript of interviews which had been conducted with Repulse Bay elders who formally resided in the Wager Bay area, which is now Ukkusiksalik National Park. The Vice-Principal spoke of the Hamlet's wish to put together a display case, containing a brief on the history of the community. It was hoped that the brief history put together could help with that project. The researcher relied upon a number of historical documents found through the Carleton library and elsewhere, along with the interview transcript, and photographs taken by the researcher of major sites around town. It was hoped that there would be an opportunity to speak with a number of elders about their recollections, but unfortunately this was not possible.

The researcher tried to stay in touch with the community upon returning back to Ottawa in September. Upon completion of the final paper, the community received copies of the research. Two versions of the paper were sent, a shorter one for everyone in town and a longer version for those who were interested in reading more detail. A key success to the work was the relationships that were established with the people of the community. Having the translator/research partner involved in the project was extremely beneficial for making connections to the community. Her personal insight into the research based on her background and her firm connections to the elders, the Hamlet Council and the HTO proved invaluable. This type of connection to the community is much more than just research support. It was also wonderful to get to know her, and her family, who were so welcoming providing traditional meals of Caribou stew and seal meat on several occasions.

The Co-op manager proved to be an invaluable resource as well. He is very well respected in Repulse, and once he recognized that the researcher was willing to work hard and do what was necessary for this research, he was very responsive to requests for help in various areas and willing to provide information for all the probing questions that were asked.

While there were important successes in these relationships, there were also challenges. Just as people from town were becoming comfortable with the researcher, she had to leave. The most interesting interviews and insightful casual

conversations of the field research happened days before leaving Repulse Bay for Rankin Inlet. Following an interview with the head of the Hunters and Trappers Association, there were a number of people that approached the researcher to share their work location and their livelihoods in the co-op restaurant and around town. There was not quite enough time to develop a trusting relationship with people to really allow them to open up to the researcher and begin to share their insights.

Another factor that impacted the research was a tragic event in the community a day or two after arriving. Three people in the community drowned in a lake just outside of town. This proved to be a huge challenge and it was best to let the research project wait for a number of days, as people grieved the loss of their loved ones. Research was delayed for about a week, and given that only a month was allocated to the field work, this did not give much time. Introductions on the radio to the researcher were given only 4 days after the tragic incident, and this may not have been the right approach, given the circumstances in the community. Recognition and respect for community needs and circumstances are very important considerations when doing research in the North.

Example 5: Housing and Homelessness in Yellowknife

This project involved the Centre for Northern Families as the community partner in the Northwest Territories. The idea for this research began with early discussions between Arlene Haché and Chris Southcott on the need for an analysis of homelessness and affordable housing in the Northwest Territories, as a component of the SERNNoCa program. This issue was then discussed by the SERNNoCa Steering Committee and it was agreed that this would be a relevant study for the social economy and someone was needed to coordinate. Frances Abele was aware of related research by Nick Falvo examining Toronto homelessness and began discussions to determine the feasibility of a study with the Centre for Northern Families. A research project was designed and a research licence submitted to the Aurora Research Institute and approved in August 2009.

The long term research experience of Abele and connections with community groups in the North were critical in establishing this research. Having a well-respected community leader as a co-investigator was another factor in developing and completing this project. Community members clearly understood that their perspective was very important to the research. Establishing trust and respect with other social economy organizations including Alternatives North, the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition and the Yellowknife Rotary Club through meetings and discussions were important to the success of this work.

The research licensing application process presented some issues through the community feedback mechanisms. Some of the written feedback received from stakeholders through the application review was not constructive and many of those providing feedback did not respond to requests to discuss their concerns and find solutions.

Having established relationships with communities or individuals in the North are factors that contribute to trust and engagement of stakeholders. The researcher through family living in the community had an advantage when connecting with groups and people in this community. This also provided an opportunity to spend additional time in the community to build research relationships without the concerns for additional subsidy to cover the high living expenses in the North. Working and researching in the North is known to be expensive, which often limits the time that researchers are able to spend in communities.

Doing research in the North takes dedication. New researchers to the North have found that if you are not from the North or known in the North your research project may not solicit the same excitement from everyone. Some may not see the benefits of the proposed research. With small populations, many communities feel over-researched and hence are reluctant to embrace new researchers and projects. It takes a long time (perhaps decades) to earn the respect of the community, and this requires the dedication of committed researchers.

A clear measure of success of the researcher is having your community partner ask for additional research to address other interests and needs in the North.

Conclusions

Having a connection to each of the Research Institutes in the North has been essential for this research network. The coordinators at these locations have links to community groups as well as to other researchers to facilitate communications and the establishment of partnerships. They are an essential support to new student researchers in providing necessary details and mechanisms for entering into dialogue with community groups. In order to begin developing a research project, local networks and connections are crucial. They offer firsthand knowledge and experience with community groups in their region, as well as an understanding of the needs and concerns of communities and the processes that are needed to establish meaningful research partnerships.

Having coordinating offices located in the North is a key strength of the Northern Node. It is recognized that northern people want to see local contact and feel more comfortable sharing information with an organization that exists

in the North. Having a central office and "sub nodes" in the NWT and Nunavut facilitated the development of research partnerships, linking the university researchers with key community organizations that have specific interests in some of the issues being researched for the social economy. The research institutes all have similar mandates and goals but generally don't work together as they focus on issues for their jurisdiction. This type of research initiative enables collaboration and provided a common platform for joint initiatives. It has given the research institutes an opportunity to participate directly in the research and to assist in the development of research partnerships in the North. Our Scientific Committee (theme coordinators) also had a long standing history of conducting research in the North and this was critical to gaining the support that was necessary for partnerships to develop. Dave Natcher was able to start the process of creating a research partnership for a new graduate student Tobi Jeans with the community of Old Crow. Similarly, Jen Alsop had the guidance of Dr. Frances Abele and Mary Nirlungayuk to begin developing a research relationship with the community of Repulse Bay, NU. Many people in the North are reluctant to participate in research, as so many studies have been done over the years and the benefits are not often recognizable to the community.

The creation of partnerships has been a key success of the research network. Linkages have been established between communities, researchers, students, and with the other social economy research networks and the HUB office. Through this work a targeted social science research community has been developing that is based in the North and is only possible because of the many partners that are involved. Through this network meaningful research partnerships have been created with the support and guidance of the members. Through meetings and workshops bringing together the research node members and community groups, new connections are made and often become the starting point for specific research projects. The need for regular communication and sharing of research ideas and details is necessary for groups to connect.

At the same time there have been challenges. One of the biggest obstacles is time constraints. There is a need to recognize the significant amount of time required to develop a research project in the North, taking into consideration community consultation and licensing processes that serve to build an effective community – university partnership. To conduct research in the North one must follow the protocols that have been established under legislative requirements to ensure that communities are consulted, northern residents are involved and ethical principles are followed. These mechanisms facilitate the process of developing community partnerships. Building research partnerships in the North is a lengthy process.

Another challenge is the high costs of doing research in the North. Travel to isolated communities is essential and this travel must occur over several

stages. Initial visits are important for establishing contact with community partners and allowing them to inform researchers of their research needs. During the data collection process researchers need to travel back to these communities in order to spend long periods of time there. This is essential for both establishing a trusting research relationship and for ensuring the quality of the data collected. Finally, travelling back to the community in order to both validate the research and share findings with community partners is a crucial part of research in the North.

In some locations distance communication is emerging as a new tool for research communication. High speed internet service is more readily available in the Yukon and NWT. Distance learning is an important component of program delivery at Yukon College, enabling students to gain access to information through video conferencing services. In Nunavut and Nunavik high speed internet service has been more limited. An attempt was made by the SERNNoCa coordinators to use Skype to communicate with one another, but this did not work well for the Nunavut coordinator. In Nunavut, the Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation (NBDC), a not-for profit corporation, is working to ensure people have reliable, affordable access to broadband services in every Nunavut community. They are working to establish multipoint video conferencing and mega file transfer with the introduction of a new broadband service in 2010-2011. Training will be required to get community members using the new technology effectively. This will enhance the ability of organizations in using distance communication more effectively. To effectively conduct research with community partners there is still the requirement for researchers to spend time in communities but distance communication technologies has helped increase ongoing communication with partners. As this advances in the North it will continue to develop as a tool for building and maintaining effective research partnerships.

In conclusion, SERNNoCa researchers were successful in establishing meaningful research relationships with community partners. A number of projects are now completed with some researchers returning to communities to present and discuss results with community partners and others interested in the study. Community workshops were effective tools that provided a better understanding of the challenges and issues faced by social economy organizations and the lack of policy supports for these groups in the North. As SERNNoCa researchers complete the remaining research projects a more complete picture of the northern social economy will provide future direction for the type of research and policies that are required to fill this gap. It is hoped that this network has opened the doors for continued research that is focused on and supports the northern social economy.

Table 9.1: SERNNoCa Research Projects

	Project #	Project Title
Theme 1: Profile of the Social Economy in the North; Coordinated by Chris Southcott, Lakehead University		
1	Project 1a	Portraiture Survey of Social Economy Organizations Dr. Chris Southcott, Lakehead University, Dr. Valoree Walker, Yukon College, Karen MacKenzie, Nunavut Arctic College and Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox, Arctic Health Research Network-Northwest Territories
2	Project 1b	Social Capital and Social Economy Development: Community Comparisons in Canada's North. Danielle McLean and Chris Southcott, Lakehead University
3	Project 1c	Social Economy and Gender in Canada's North. Tomiko Hoshizaki and Chris Southcott, Lakehead University
Theme 2: Resource Regimes & the Social Economy in the North; Coordinated by Brenda Parlee, University of Alberta		
4	Project 2a	Impact of Participation in the Wage Economy on Traditional Harvesting, Dietary Patterns and Social Networks in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region Zoe Todd and Dr. Brenda Parlee, University of Alberta
5	Project 2b	The Boom and Bust of Food Security. Angie Chiu, Brenda Parlee and Ellen Goddard, University of Alberta
6	Project 2c	The Meaning of Education for Inuvialuit in Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, Canada. Raila Salokangas (Masters student) and Brenda Parlee, University of Alberta
Theme 3: The State and the Northern Social Economy; Coordinated by Frances Abele, Carleton University		
7	Project 3a	History of the Mixed Economy and Policy Initiatives Senada Delic, Tim O'Loan and Frances Abele, Carleton University
8	Project 3b	Survey of Available Statistical Information Pertinent to Understanding the Northern Social Economy - Senada Delic and Frances Abele, Carleton University
9	Project 3c	A Green Housing Development in Iqaluit - Social Economy Interaction with City, Territorial and Federal Governments - Jerald Sabin and Frances Abele, Carleton University
10	Project 3d	Building Empirically-Based Economic Models in the Arctic: A Look at Igloolik, NU Sheena Kennedy and Frances Abele, Carleton University
11	Project 3e	The Role of Co-operative Enterprise in the Social Economy of Repulse Bay, Nunavut Jennifer Alsop and Frances Abele, Carleton University
12	Project 3f	Evolution of the Social Economy in Yellowknife Jerald Sabin and Frances Abele, Carleton University

13	Project 3g	Housing and Being Homeless in Yellowknife Nicholas Falvo and Frances Abele, Carleton University and Arlene Hache, Centre for Northern Families
14	Project 3h	Housing as a Dimension of Poverty in the Yukon Nicholas Falvo and Frances Abele, Carleton University
Theme 4: Indigenous Communities & the Social Economy; Coordinated by David Natcher, University of Saskatchewan		
15	Project 4a	Hunting Support Program and Sustaining Locally-based Livelihoods in the North Damian Castro, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Dr. David Natcher, University of Saskatchewan
16	Project 4b	Examining the Northern Social Economy Through the Lens of Natural Resource Management in Labrador Carolina Tytleman, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Dr. David Natcher, University of Saskatchewan
17	Project 4c	Food Security and the Cross-Border Dimensions of the Vuntut Gwich'in Social Economy David Natcher, University of Saskatchewan, Norma Kassi and Jody Butler-Walker, Arctic Health Research Network-Yukon, Tobi Jeans, University of Saskatchewan
18	Project 4d	Subsistence and the Social Economy of the Nunatsiavutmiut .David Natcher, University of Saskatchewan, Nunatsiavut Government, Larry Felt, Memorial University, Jim McDonald, University of Saskatchewan and Andrea Procter, Memorial University
Projects Coordinated by Other Researchers		
19	Project 5	Contributions of Volunteering in Outdoor Recreation to the Social Economy in Whitehorse. Margaret Johnston, Lakehead University, Carrie McClelland (Masters student)
20	Project 6	Mining and the Social Economy in the Canadian North. Arn Keeling, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Jean-Sébastien Boutet (Masters student)
22	Project 8	The Relationship of the Social Economy to Community Development and Park Creation: A Case Study in Lutsel K'e, Northwest Territories. Raynald Harvey Lemelin, Lakehead University and Nathan Bennett (Masters student)
23	Project 9	Co-operative Development in the Yukon Doug Lionais, Cape Breton University and Kim Hardy (Masters student)
24	Project 10	The Role of Inuit Land Claim Organizations in the Northern Social Economy Coordinated by Dr. Thierry Rodon, Universite Laval
25	Project 11	A Galleria of Co-operatives in the Canadian North Dr. Ian MacPherson, University of Victoria and Jen Alsop, Carleton University
27	Project 13	Language, Place and Governance in Deline, Northwest Territories: Monitoring Persistence and Change in the Social Economy of a Northern Community Dr Deborah Simmons, University of Manitoba and Sarah Gordon, Indianna University

Endnotes

1. See: http://www.nunatsiavut.com

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CHAPTER 10

The Academic/Practitioner Divide – Fact or Fiction? Reflection on the Role of the Lead Staff Personnel

Annie McKitrick – The Hub Coordinator
Stuart Wulff - BALTA
Heather Acton – Northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan Node
Denis Bussières – Coordinator Quebec Node
Noreen Millar – Coordinator, Atlantic Node
Laurie Mook – Coordinator, Southern Ontario Node, and
Valoree Walker – Coordinator, Northern Node
(with assistance from Sarah Amyot)

This paper draws from the experience, insight and thinking of the coordinators of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP), a Community-University Research Partnerships program funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). CSERP included a national "hub" and six regional research networks or nodes covering

Some Key Characteristics of the Six Nodes and the Hub

The six regional nodes were: Atlantic; Québec; Southern Ontario; Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern Ontario; British Columbia and Alberta (BALTA); & Northern Canada.

Number of time zones working across: ranged from five for the Hub and Northern Node to one for Quebec and Southern Ontario.

Number of provinces and territories worked in: Half a province for the Southern Ontario Node (mostly the Greater Toronto area), one for Québec, two for BALTA, four for the Atlantic Node, three for the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario Node, and three territories and two provinces for the Northern Node.

Number of languages: One for the Québec Node, two for the Hub, Atlantic and Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario Nodes and between three to five for the Northern Node depending on the territory (Yukon – 8 aboriginal languages, NWT – 9 aboriginal languages, Nunavut & Nunavik– Inuktitut). Some BALTA outputs have been translated into French, German, Japanese and Swedish. The Hub assisted with the translation of material – mostly from French to English.

Starting date: Four nodes and the hub began in September 2005 and two of the nodes began in March/April 2006.

Experience of Social Economy research: One node had no staff with prior experience in working or researching the Social Economy, four nodes had Principal Investigators who had worked together in the past and belonged to the same academic society (Canadian Association for the Study of Cooperation), and one node was headed by a community organization with few ties to the academic researchers.

the various regions of Canada. CSERP partnerships were funded over the period of 2005-2012, with the start and completion dates of each node and the national "hub" varying somewhat, with none extending longer than six years.

This paper offers insights from our experience and perspective on the challenges of creating effective research partnerships bridging the academic and practitioner communities, approaches to addressing these challenges and implications for creating effective future partnerships. We also offer some thoughts on the specific role of lead staff persons within complex community-university research partnerships.

The CSERP partnerships were modeled in part on other Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) partnerships funded by SSHRC and required a partnership agreement between an academic institution and one or more practitioner-led, community-based organizations. Six of the CSERP partnerships were led by a university partner (or lead) while one, BALTA, was led by a community organization (see Table 10.1: for descriptions of each node and the national hub; see also Appendices A1 to A7).

Each of the regional bodies, called nodes, and the national hub were unique in terms of their structure, approach and operations. Further, each employed a different approach to the role of the main staff in assisting the principal investigator (PI) in managing the work of the research partnership. The coordinators' diverse backgrounds, roles, and the setting of each node and the hub resulted in seven very different contexts, creating an ideal opportunity to explore the effectiveness, usefulness and appropriateness of ways to organize community-university partnerships (see Table 10.1).

The coordinators had the opportunity to meet in person and through teleconferences and discussed writing a reflection of their experiences. A number of themes were agreed to and each coordinator was asked to contribute to this. As part of the reflective process, we discussed the paper with many of the principal investigators and directors of the nodes and the hub. The Hub Manager and the BALTA Coordinator took the lead in pulling the paper together and in providing the opportunity for each coordinator to feel that the paper reflected their input.

One of the coordinators observed, "Organizations working within the social economy often need support to help them bridge the 'policy' gap in their work." (These groups are often those who best know and understand the needs of the various communities they represent, and so their "advocacy" or other work in the community is often driven by great knowledge. The benefit of a community-university research partnership to this process is that community partner's experiences can be operationalized into research problems with support from academic researchers, allowing them to produce evidence-based policy recommendations. At times, this process can be halted due to a lack of direct and

appropriate means of input to government processes of policy development (i.e., the "Recommendations" papers gathering dust on shelves). The value of inviting government representatives to sit around a table with community and academic partners cannot be underestimated. Often, none of these participants possess the means to make this happen outside of a research partnership environment. The beauty of this model is that community and academic participants are brought together with government partners at meetings, at book launches, or at research conferences, allowing formal and informal conversations to happen. Without this potential outlet for their knowledge of their communities, the work of social economy organizations in their communities can too often go unnoticed in the government processes of policy development. Without this potential input to their work, government partners run the risk of operating without direct knowledge of the lived experiences within the communities of their jurisdiction.

Salipante and Aran (2003) describe the concept of practitioners as: "knowledge generators who combine intimate understanding of issues, problems and settings with established theories and methods" (p. 129). A second useful concept elaborated on by the authors was the discussion on the systems of knowledge production. They suggest two modes of knowledge production. Mode 1 is defined as "traditional discipline-oriented research, which is defined by the cognitive context of a particular disciplinary intellectual community (i.e., universities, research labs or corporate research centers)" (p. 133). It is generated primarily by individual creative efforts and is disseminated through peer-reviewed journals and professional associations. Mode 2 is "knowledge driven by an application where a specific and local problem needs a solution" (p. 134). Knowledge results from the convergence of a number of disciplines applying themselves to the problem. It is distributed through occupational and professional networks. Another author, Huff (2000), argues for model 1.5 which she defines as "residing above the other modes by combining an emphasis on practice enriched with traditional academic skills in order to produce public goods" (p. 135).

Community-university partnerships in research are interesting creations as they link together two very different institutions; in this instance, post-secondary educational institutions and non-profit organizations, with dissimilar organizational cultures, governance structures, human resource policies, mission/values and funding practices. The culture of these diverse institutions very much influences their expectations in a partnership relationship. The role of the coordinator, as the lead staff person positioned between the world of academia and that of the community sector, needs to be seen as an important translator and bridge between these different cultures. This role was crucially important as the partnerships evolved.

In examining large research partnerships, such as CSERP, and the management, coordination, facilitation demands they create, it is vital to recognize their essential complexity. Part of this complexity arises simply from the size and the scope of research (number of co-investigators and collaborators and sub-projects, range of activity, etc.); however, it also arises in some cases, very notably with the CSERP projects, with regards to the multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary nature of the subjects of inquiry. In the case of CSERP and research on the social economy, this disciplinary complexity is further driven by the relatively new and contested conceptualization of the field. One can then add to this list of factors shaping the challenges inherent in creating true partnerships between diverse organizations and organizational cultures, challenges that exist with developing and managing all types of partnership coalitions. All of these factors contribute to the creation of a demanding management context that requires particular skills and organizational capacity to successfully navigate.

The complex management and facilitation required in creating a research partnership that truly co-constructs research and new knowledge must exist across a range of functions through the whole life cycle of the research process. In the following list, we further elaborate on these functions.

- Co-Visioning of Project Goals, Approaches and Governance: Partners must negotiate a common understanding of the research mandate and aims, and the broad scope of the work. This is not only a challenge between the academic and community partners, but amongst both the academic partners and the community partners. Building effective co-construction of research and knowledge without effectively addressing this co-visioning step is like building a house without a foundation.
- Co-Development of Policy for the Partnership: A common understanding of how power will be shared and used, how decisions will be made, how research will be managed, how students will be hired and so on, is critical.
- Co-Planning of Research both its Broad Themes and Specific Research Projects: Effective collaboration of both academic and community partners/co-investigators and collaborators, can bring the assets of each to creating optimum research plans. This applies both in terms of the broad research parameters and specific research projects.
- Co-Approval of Research: While the nodes and the hub had differing approval processes for research projects, all involved an important degree of co-approval at some level.
- Co-Management: Joint steering or management committees, with a balance of community and academic representation, overseeing the management of the projects provides an ongoing partnership discipline and accountability back to the partner.

- Co-Implementation of Research: Practice varied widely at this stage, with some nodes largely leaving the actual implementation of research to academics, while others had some projects led by community based researchers. If true partnership and co-construction of the research program exists at the other levels, it seems less critical who actually does the research as long as they have the requisite knowledge/skills. However some nodes found it extremely valuable, at least in some cases to have research projects co-led by an academic and a community based practitioner, bringing the particular assets of each to the research implementation process.
- Co-Analysis/and co-synthesis of research results: The strongest interpretation and use of research results is obtained where both community and academic partners bring their perspectives to the analysis and synthesis of the research. (Bussières, see Appendix B)
- Co-Dissemination of research/knowledge mobilization: Both community and academic partners bring particular niches and expertise to the dissemination and mobilization of the research. The most effective dissemination and mobilization strategies will make optimal use of both.
- Co-Evaluation: A true spirit of partnership requires the full involvement of both community and academic partners and stakeholders in evaluating the research partnership, both with regards to process and product.

Balancing the power and decision making roles of partners, both academic and community, is vital to creating partnerships that go beyond token community organization involvement. Who does what matters; the roles and responsibilities in the partnership need to be clearly defined to avoid mistrust and build a deep sense of shared ownership over the research process.

Table 10.1: Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships: Seven Different Organizational Models

Node/Hub	Host Institution	Community Partners	Position of Main Staff Person	New or Existing Partnership
Hub	BC Institute for Co-operative Studies (a research institute located at the University of Victoria)	Canadian CED Network (CCEDNet)	Hub staff, not core University staff. Newly employed to work for the Hub, not existing university staff.	New partnership between BCICS and CCEDNET – both located in Victoria

Node/Hub	Host Institution	Community Partners	Position of Main Staff Person	New or Existing Partnership
Atlantic Node	Mount Saint Vincent University	Newfoundland and Labrador Community Council	Node staff located at MSVU	New partnership across Atlantic provinces, with co-directors in each provinces
Québec Node	Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)	Chantier de l'économie sociale	Worked out of UQAM but was staff of the community partner	Prior CURAs and experience with existing partners.
Southern Ontario Node	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto	Imagine Canada and the Ontario Co-operative Council	Co-director, post doctoral student and researcher	New partnership
Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan Node	Centre for the Study of Co-operatives at the University of Saskatchewan	Community University Institute for Social Research (CUISR), the Winnipeg Inner City Research Alliance (WIRA), Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, and the Department of Community, Economic and Social Development, Algoma University	Librarian and program staff existing in the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives	New partnership across the three provinces but built upon the strength of the Institute and previous partnerships
BC-Alberta Node	Canadian Centre for Community Renewal. This node was led by a community partner	Royal Roads University as the academic partner receiving the SSHRC funding	Coordinator working for the CCCR and BALTA steering committee located in a home office	New partnership with academic and community institutions developed

Node/Hub	Host Institution	Community Partners	Position of Main Staff Person	New or Existing Partnership
Northern Node	Yukon College & Lakehead University (PI and Node Director located at Lakehead University in Ontario)	Yukon College, Aurora College, Nunavut Arctic College	Coordinator located in the Northern Research Institute of Yukon College	New partnership

The CSERP Experience

In 2009, individuals involved with the various nodes and Hub began reflecting on their experience with CSERPs with a goal of learning more about the practice of community-university partnerships generally. At the time, Hall, et al. (2009) commented on challenges faced by the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships noting that they begin to "raise more general questions about the prospects for practitioner-university engagement in research partnerships" (page 8). Among the challenges noted at the time were the different expectations and traditions about the role of research among the community and university partners, and a set of institutional factors that shape the "possibilities for partnership and engagement in research" (page 10). The potential challenges inherent in any research endeavor with such diverse partners are well documented (Flicker & Savan, 2006; Holland & Ramalay, 2008; Israel, et al., 1998; Prins, 2006; Reinke & Walker, 2006; Stoecker, 1999). However, as community-university partnerships develop in number and complexity there is a need for increased reflection on the factors that contribute to their success. For example, McNall, et al. (2008) identify a number of criteria for successful engagement, including shared leadership and resources, two-way communication, participatory decision making and agreed upon problem-solving processes, mutual respect and benefit, flexibility and innovation, and ongoing evaluation.

In co-construction of knowledge (Vaillancourt, 2009), a key aim of community university research partnerships requires a constant exchange between practitioners and researchers in all stages of conducting the research that goes from problem identification to dissemination of results. Foster-Fishman, et al. (2001) emphasize the importance of building collaborative capacity for effective coalition development. Such collaborative capacity also involves the development and facilitation of "relational capacity," both internal and external. Our experience with CSERP suggests that, in most cases, the lead investigator and other senior co-investigators do not have the time or range of specific skills

required to most effectively play the facilitative and management role in fostering successful partnerships. They had other key roles to play and needed to focus their attention there. A lead staff person, in the form of a coordinator, played this key role as part of the leadership team for the research partnership. This CSERP experience is supported by the literature evaluating effective partnerships. For example, both Alteroff and Knights (2009) and Creech and Willart (2001) emphasize the importance of such a manager/coordinator/facilitator role, with Alteroff and Knights also noting the value of recruiting someone with a practitioner background from outside the academic community to play this role.

The development of relationships of trust takes time. Our experience with CSERP suggests that if there was not a pre-existing relationship present at the beginning of the SSHRC award, it took several years to solidify the relationship and for trust and co-management of the research project to be truly present. The Quebec coordinator explains that:

> … it is the development of interaction between researchers and practitioners throughout the research that is important. These interactions allow the building of bridges between the world of researchers and that of practitioners. Gradually differences in language and perception become clearer and the group begins to own the problem. A culture of trust develops which builds successful projects. (for original French see Appendix B).

Further, he notes that the idea of an unbridgeable gulf between the world of practice and theory may be an excuse for not engaging in the reflection required to support strong partnerships.

This observation was strongly echoed in the evaluation conducted on the early development of BALTA, the BC-Alberta node (see also Chapter 8). This node was the only one led by a community based organization and it created an almost entirely new collaborative community with its own identity, values, systems and policies rather than building on the existing set-up within an academic institution. Thus, it presented certain relatively unique challenges. The process of developing the partnership was closely followed during the first three years by a doctoral student evaluator hired by BALTA. Evidence of the gradual evolution from a culture of "we" and "they" to one of "us" clearly emerges from the evaluation data. It took time and it took a great deal of effort, including facilitation by the coordinator, the lead investigator and players with the collaborative and relational capacity referred to by Foster-Fisherman et al. (2001).

As noted above, for both practitioners and academics, participating in a CURA is only one of many competing calls on their time and resources. Within CSERP none of the principal investigators (PI) were involved full-time in that role. Often this particular partnership was only one of many research projects in

which the PI played a leadership role. In fact, it is often the case that the PI was successful in obtaining a SSHRC grant because of their distinguished research achievements and the leadership they had demonstrated. They chaired editorial boards, participated in other CURAs, chaired university departments, supervised PhD students, taught undergraduates and graduate students, managed their own research institutions (for example, BCICS and the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives), and pursued other research interests. In the case of the BC-Alberta node, the lead investigator was the executive director of a community-based organization with extensive management and program responsibilities, as well as an active role in research. It should also be noted that most of the academic researchers involved in the nodes and the hub had strong connections to practitioner organizations through their volunteer involvement, an important contribution to the partnership and one that creates additional commitments. Practitioners had their own set of challenges as they faced funding crises, policy changes at the federal and provincial level, and the complexities of running their own organization or network. As executive directors or senior managers of national or regional organizations, they needed to find time for the community-university research partnerships while devoting time to programs, human resources, budgets, governance, and advocacy within their own organizations. Despite immense effort and goodwill on the part of all parties, the coordinator was the only person whose time and intellect was engaged in this endeavor on a full-time basis.

It should also be emphasized that many of the practitioners involved had strong research backgrounds through previous employment or academic experiences, which contributed to their ability to make the relationship work. As the pressure on community organizations to adopt "evidence-based" approaches and research in their work mounts, many more practitioners are returning to the academy, further blurring the lines between academic and practitioner. The Québec coordinator for example, noted that, in his experience nobody is a pure practitioner or a pure theorist and that sometimes the gap can be greater among practitioners than between researcher and practitioners. Practitioners who come from different worlds, such as a practitioner working in a community organization and a representative of a government department, do not necessarily share the same experience or perspective. Sometimes it is more difficult to build a relationship or shared perspective among these parties than between a researcher and practitioner who may have a similar outlook (for original French, see Appendix B). In some cases, community based co-investigators took on direct roles in leading or contributing directly to research, further blurring the boundaries, and further adding to the time demands and conflicting priorities they faced.

The coordinators for CSERP exemplified these multiple roles as we were neither academic researchers (i.e., university paid faculty) nor practitioners

(i.e., not working for a social economy organization) in the traditional sense. Negotiating this unique position meant that we had to gain the trust of both groups to be able to function in our roles and provide needed support for the development of research priorities and ensure the validation of practitioner voices within the university setting.

It should also be noted that the academic institutions hosting the nodes and the Hub were as diverse as their community partners. They ranged from comprehensive universities with large research and graduate programs to smaller regional universities with mainly undergraduate students. Yukon College had never hosted a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant prior to the Social Economy Suite grant and had to build up systems and expertise as required for this project. They also had to establish SSHRC eligibility. Another of the nodes (BALTA) was headed by a community organization with no prior experience working with SSHRC. BALTA's lead agency, the Canadian Center for Community Renewal, also needed to undertake the SSHRC eligibility process, though eventually this route was dropped in favour of having the SSHRC grant provided through one of the academic partners.

An added complication for the Northern Node was the requirement to clearly understand the existing processes and procedures for doing research and establishing meaningful community partnerships in the northern context. Northern people want to see that community needs and interests drive research initiatives, and have institutionalized this requirement in the research licensing process (see Chapter 9). The success of the Northern Node in engaging in research projects depended on the coordinator's thorough understanding of the research processes as well as her knowledge of the North.

The regional breadth of the nodes created its own challenges for staff. The Northern Node coordinator was working across four and half time zones, three territories and two additional northern regions in Québec and Labrador. Materials had to be translated to Inuktitut for research and related activities in Nunavut. Generally this was not required in the other Territories but had to be considered for the research in the North. The Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan Node also covered a very large area and three time zones, which provided for interesting discussions on setting times for meetings – as some participants were having their morning coffee and others were eating lunch! The node also had to maneuver different and shifting provincial political focuses and legal frameworks. This has been challenging. That said, what has emerged is less of an emphasis on the differences between the three provinces and more on the similarities they share. Only the Québec and Southern Ontario nodes worked in a single time zone.

A suitable analogy is that of a double income family with children where the partners manage complex relationships, have limited time and resources, see one another in quick passes in the kitchen or though messages left on the fridge door as they take the kids to soccer or are off to work. If the partners do not make time to nurture their own relationship, few families can survive the hectic years of raising kids while maintaining careers. Within CSERP, similar attention and time was required of the partners to develop and maintain the necessary levels of trust and engagement. Looking back on the past six years, we can see how these relationships have evolved and deepened with time. The extent to which partners within the nodes and throughout CSERP made time to invest and nurture the relationships was an important contributor to the success of the community-university relationship.

Successes

Given this complex environment, the coordinators for each node and the Hub played an important role in the development of a trusting relationship; they became the conduit between the interests of practitioners and that of researchers. They communicated, arranged meetings, translated SSHRC policy for the non-initiated, engaged in knowledge dissemination and mobilization activities, developed communication materials and supported both practitioners and researchers in their research. They were the constant point of contact to which questions were addressed – and interestingly all seven stayed in their position for the length of the grant. They were able to work together to maximize resources and share their knowledge with the others to ensure success of conferences, workshops, websites, knowledge mobilization products and to apply SSHRC requirements. In summary, the coordinators acted as cultural brokers between the academic institutions and SSHRC, and that of the social economy organizations.

We found this role complicated by a number of institutional factors, including university and funding policies. The coordinator's position was described as an administrative role by university human resources managers and some academic participants in the nodes, the primary function of which was to ensure projects followed SSHRC and university directives. However, as our experiences suggest this is an entirely insufficient imaging (model/view/perception) of the coordinator's role.

The experience of those selected as coordinators thus blurred the lines between academia, practitioner and administrator; and indeed, so did our work once hired. We facilitated and nurtured the partnerships, engaged in research, developed projects, supervised and mentored students, wrote grant applications, co-authored papers, developed museum exhibits, gave presentations, while maintaining the necessary paperwork to satisfy both university and SSHRC requirements.

Examples of the contribution of the coordinators and the Hub manager include:

- The Northern Node coordinators (Yukon, NWT and Nunavut) all collected data for the portraiture survey. This involved collecting data via telephone and in person surveys in some cases. They collected the data in each of the territories and entered it into an access database. This provided a local point of contact for social economy organizations. The coordinators were co-researchers on the project.
- The Hub Manager directly supervised student researchers and engaged in a number of research projects including a study the social economy content in Canadian senior secondary schools and researched the social economy in Kyrgyzstan.
- The Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan Node coordinator who is also a librarian helped to curate a museum exhibit that showcased the benefit of the social economy.
- Two "community liaison officers" working within the partner organizations (CUISR and WIRA) of the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario Node, have been actively engaged in research and writing and have done more of the hand-holding with students and community partners. They were one-step closer to the actual research. These two individuals were not faculty, were not community partners, were not students – they were coordinators/researchers.
- The BC and Alberta Node coordinator is the co-editor of a special edition of the Canadian Review of Social Policy, has contributed to various publications, has made conference and other presentations, and supervises students.
- The Atlantic Node coordinator is the author of a book to be published by Mount Saint Vincent University: Mapping the Social Economy of Atlantic Canada: Profiles of Community Partners in the Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network, 2005-2010.

These were complex roles requiring a sophisticated understanding of the community-university environment and the social economy, and strong facilitation skills. SSHRC's regulations which restrict the direct involvement in research of staff paid from the SSHRC grant do not recognize the complex and inter-related requirements of effectively facilitating and supporting effective partnership research programs. In the interests of effectiveness most of the nodes stretched the bounds of this restriction considerably, in the best interests of their partnerships and the research. The roles that the coordinators took on involved them in the development and implementation of the research program of CSERP – they were not just administrators. SSHRC's restrictions on the role of what were presumed in general perceptions to be paid university based administrators

and support staff did not well serve the interests of complex community based research partnerships and SSHRC does itself, its partners and the ultimate beneficiaries of research no favours with these arbitrary restrictions.

Nor do such restrictions on activity make the most of the experience, education and skills that the people being recruited for these coordinator positions bring to the task. Most coordinators had extensive post-secondary education. One of the coordinator's had completed a PhD and been involved in various research projects and programs in their region. This education background was critical to understanding the research processes and academic requirements. Another coordinator taught sociology in university settings and is enrolled in a PhD program. She also had prior experience in community-research partnerships. One of the coordinators had a Master degree and began a PhD in community-university research partnership and knowledge mobilization in the last year of the node. Although he came from the community sector, from the beginning he was involved in the research projects. One of our numbers had also spent most of his professional life as the lead staff person with a range of diverse partnership coalitions. One of the coordinators had extensive experience working for community organizations and pursued a Master's degree tying academic studies with areas of CSERP research.

As coordinators, we have also felt that the perception of our roles as administrative and the restrictions created by SSHRC policies have contributed to a formal undervaluing and under-crediting of the contributions we have made to the research and the partnerships, though informally we have all received considerable acknowledgment from individual members of our CSERPs as to the value of our work and contributions. But unlike co-investigators and collaborators, there is no recognition within SSHRC or elsewhere of our intellectual contributions to the research. Given the recognition in the evaluation literature on partnerships of the importance of these coordinator roles and the experience of CSERP and other CURAs, it would seem to follow that a re-orientation in how SSHRC and the academic community looks at these roles is overdue.

Each of the nodes and the Hub developed unique management structures, including vis a vis the staff role. While we have suggested elsewhere in this chapter that there are fundamental principles and approaches that are integral to creating truly effective community-university partnerships, we also recognize that there is no one correct model for doing this. Each of the nodes and hub within CSERP developed approaches specific to their circumstances and each model had its strengths. With respect to the formal recognition of the importance of the coordinator's role, the Southern Ontario Node offered an interesting and illuminating model of how to elevate and recognize this role within the overall partnership framework. Though the specific circumstances would not transfer to other situations (the coordinator's role was a post-doctoral position) and even it

had some shortcomings, there are some features of the Ontario approach which could potentially be applied to other contexts.

Briefly, the Southern Ontario Node had two co-directors, the lead investigator and the coordinator's position. While each had somewhat different and complementary roles (as was equally true of the other nodes), the formal management structure incorporated and recognized the importance of the coordinator's role. The coordinator was paid partly through the SSHRC grant as the partnership staff and partly as a post-doctoral researcher. She was able to undertake research wearing her post-doctoral hat; however, she was not permitted to do so through the SSHRC paid staff position (given SSHRC's restrictions on grant paid staff being co-investigators). If SSHRC's policies and approach could be revised to recognize the broader role and research engagement of paid coordinators, such convoluted structures would not be necessary to achieve in practice what we all had to do through various forms of work-around vis a vis the policy.

While the Southern Ontario model had some virtues, the person in the position still noted that it did not recognize her as a co-investigator, thus limiting to some degree the benefit to her in building her academic credentials and career. Given the importance of the coordinator's role and the value of recruiting qualified people to perform these demanding roles, surely it would be a good strategy to structure the policy governing these roles in ways that maximizes the value of these positions for both the partnerships and the persons holding the positions.

The "divide" between practitioners and academic researchers may also be, in part, a creation of SSHRC regulations regarding salary replacement for community based co-investigators and use of funds. The salary replacement seems to have been modeled after release time funding for academics, with the assumptions that the co-investigators are already salaried research staff (like academics) who simply need to be released from their regular work to do the SSHRC funded research. But the reality in most community organizations is that staff is pushed for time to function fully as collaborators or co-investigators in the general partnership development and functioning, but are not necessarily the people with specific research skills needed to implement research. In the community sector, such people are often independent researchers who are hired by organizations for specific projects. SSHRC's policy that limits direct salary payments only to people who replace the theoretical staff researcher and don't allow for direct hiring of community based research staff severely limits the potential direct involvement of community partners in the implementation of research. This can reinforce the divide between the academic and community participants in the research partnership. While some partnerships manage to work within this limitation, others that see significant value in direct community based research involvement find the SSHRC policy an impediment.

The inability for practitioners to be funded beyond travel costs (or other very limited activities) was a continuing point of frustration, especially as the federal government cancelled a proposed funding package to social economy practitioner organizations at the same moment the research centres were beginning. Overcoming this has been an ongoing challenge throughout the life of the CSERPs. As Heisler, Beckie and Markey note in Chapter 8:

> "… it was widely acknowledged by all members that the major obstacle to practitioners fully engaging with BALTA has been the SSHRC funding policy that restricts direct compensation of practitioner involvement in BALTA. This policy therefore presents a dilemma for practitioners wanting to be fully involved in BALTA research, yet at the same time who must fulfill their responsibilities as paid staff in community organizations." (p. 232)

As much as possible the directors of the node and the Hub sought to find other funding or creative ways to support practitioners. For example, the Northern Node coordinator developed funding applications and received additional funds from other sources for travel of participants from communities to attend workshops/symposia that featured social economy research and allowed for input and recommendations by the practitioners. The Atlantic Node found that offering support to the practitioners to travel to conferences, allowed them to talk to academics and other community groups and be engaged in the knowledge mobilization process. However, if SSHRC is truly committed to supporting real and equitable community participation in these research partnerships, then different funding policies could assist in enabling this to happen.

Were this "divide" removed, it would also remove a major irritant for practitioners or community organizations that often faced yearly funding challenges. The remaining differences in culture would still need to be addressed but the power imbalance created by the SSHRC rules would be gone.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There are several fundamental premises and conclusions that run through this paper:

1. Community-university partnership, for relevant areas of research, is highly worthwhile and brings the potential to achieve a range of aims that would be difficult or impossible for either community organizations or academic institutions to achieve without the active participation of the other.
2. The effectiveness and impact of the research, both directly and in terms of wider spinoff effects, are greatly enhanced when the partnership goes beyond simple engagement of community partners in ancillary roles and instead create true partnership and co-construction of research and knowledge.

Such co-construction requires a balancing of power and truly collaborative efforts at all stages throughout the evolution of the partnership and research.

3. Creating real partnership in research takes significant commitment, time, effort and management/facilitation capacity.

In dealing with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) over the past several years, many of us have observed that there is a philosophical commitment to community-university (C-U) research partnership within SSHRC, but this philosophical commitment has not been adequately worked through at the detail of policies, decision making and programs that enhance the effectiveness of SSHRC's support for such partnership research. In some cases, this seems to lead to approval of partnerships and CURA-type projects that are superficial at best in their approach to partnership. For those seeking to build truly effective and collaborative partnership, we have found that SSHRC's policies and procedures create some obstacles to doing so.

We are somewhat encouraged by the signals sent through SSHRC's recent adoption of a new funding architecture with increased attention to evaluating the quality of partnership in project proposals. Time will tell how significantly this impacts on actual decision-making. However, we note that SSHRC's attention seems to have focused almost entirely outwards in terms of what it can expect from project proposers in terms of ensuring enhanced attention to meaningful partnership, but has still not adequately looked inwards to how SSHRC's policies and procedures can better support (or continue to handicap) partnership and meaningful community participation in research. Until SSHRC takes this additional step, we feel that what it seeks to achieve with its support for C-U partnerships will continue to be somewhat hamstrung by its own conditions that it imposes on these partnerships.

With respect to this need for SSHRC to re-examine its approach to supporting research partnership at the level of specific policies, we believe it is especially important to take a closer look at the realities of involvement in research by community organizations and to re-tailor policies to better support enhancing of community involvement.

We have also chosen in this paper to highlight the important role that we believe is played by the coordinator-type staff position and the need to adopt policies and procedures that fully recognize and support this role. Our advice in this respect is directed both to SSHRC as the funder, some of whose policies run contrary to fully recognizing this role, and to future lead investigators and co-applicants as they design their partnership research proposals and eventual partnerships. Complex partnerships that are committed to true co-construction of research and knowledge are not easy to develop or manage effectively. They require highly skilled people in both the lead investigator and coordinator roles

and full recognition of the complementary roles played by both. CSERP has actually been quite successful in the caliber of people they have attracted to the coordinator roles, but like other SSHRC funded CURAs, they have not always been able to maximize their effective use of the people in those roles due both to SSHRC restrictions and lingering institutional attitudes regarding these positions as simply administrative support.

The coordinators played a significant and somewhat diverse role in the research network. Some of the key unifying roles included:

1. Providing a stable, dedicated full time individual to the program and the specific node or the Hub office with 100% commitment to the research program.
2. Coordinators were the critical point of contact for practitioners/community members and for students.
3. Acting as the key point of communication and dissemination of the research.
4. Facilitating networking opportunities across the regions.
5. Assisting in research projects through data collection, supervision of students, editing of papers, literature reviews, and as researchers.
6. Coordinating community engagement and knowledge mobilization.

In suggesting enhanced recognition for the coordinator role and flexibility regarding the involvement of coordinators in research roles, we are not suggesting that they be the lead investigator on a research project, as they should not be consumed by conducting research at the cost of their other responsibilities. Our point is that affective complex research partnerships require both a lead investigator and a coordinator, that both play vitally important roles, and that the best partnerships make the most of both roles. Being a part of a research team and playing a role in the research projects as required should be allowed for coordinators. This creates a greater connection with the community/practitioner team members and the researchers. It would not be for all projects but as required and determined through a research team approach. It gives recognition to the abilities of the coordinators to facilitate and help in the development of the research, allowing them to provide their input and recommendations and assist where possible. One of the coordinators has pointed out that the position was advertised in some cases as requiring a Master degree but because of the SSHRC guidelines for the Social Economy Suite, this lead to having someone in place with skills and experience that could not effectively be used – as well as some degree of frustration on the part of the incumbent who may have been lured by the promise of involvement in research and then basically told "hands off."

In the experience of the CSERP coordinators, they needed to have a trusted relationship with the principal investigator (PI) and community leads. Since the university base did the administration and financial management of the

project, the coordinator had to be trusted by the community partners in terms of their application of SSHRC and university rules. The ability to communicate transparent rules applicable to all involved especially in dealing with financial matters was important. The coordinator needed to have the authority and the support of the principal investigator in their application of rules.

As CSERP evolved, the coordinators collectively began to take on a larger role in decision-making. For example, if the principal investigator was not able to attend monthly meetings, the coordinators joined the calls and contributed. They attended the ANSER and CASC yearly conferences and often presented. They contributed to the knowledge mobilization projects and where instrumental in devising innovative ways to communicate the research.

The Southern Ontario experience points to a model that highlighted the role of the coordinator as both a lead in terms of administration but also as contributing to the research mandate of CSERP. This twin role of administration and research is a useful point for considering a model for future community-university research partnership. The principal investigator must also see the coordinator as a person who will enable the research to take place – a person dedicated to the project with the time and skill to support the interest of the PI.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that the job description for community-university research partnership "coordinators" emphasizes the linking role and the contribution it has to the research endeavor.
2. Ensure that the salary and sphere of authority reflects the fulcrum role of the coordinator.
3. Ensure that there is a written agreement or Memorandum of Agreement on how finances and decisions will be made between the university and community lead. This document should also establish that all involved in the Partnership must abide by SSHRC and host university policies.
4. The principal investigator and community lead must commit to setting time aside regularly to plan, resolve administrative issues and iron out the differences that arise.
5. The coordinator must be empowered to support practitioners and facilitate their engagement with the academic community.
6. Community organizations who partner with universities to engage in research must internalize the project within their agency. They need to find ways to engage the whole agency in the partnership. It cannot be delegated to only one person as representing the agency.

7. There must be a way to provide a stipend or salary replacement to community agencies that provide leadership to research projects.
8. The Knowledge Mobilization activities must be planned and funded from the beginning of the project. It cannot be left to the last year of the project and has to have the input of the community lead agency.
9. The coordinator should be seen as a "pracademic" (Van Til, in Salipante and Aram, 2003) in their engagement and contribution to the research mandate of the partnership.

The Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships over the past six years benefited from the dedication of over 300 engaged academics, practitioners, students and staff. Its success was due in part to the tenacity of the Hub and node coordinators who worked hard to mitigate the challenges of working with two very different institutional realities, who initiated innovative knowledge mobilization tools, coached students and often acted as a spokesperson on the social economy. Their role, including engagement in the research mandate of the partnership, must be recognized in the selection process of candidates and in the decision-making within the partnership.

Their experience points to the importance of community-university research partnerships having a full time dedicated coordinator with the skills and experience to navigate the two different cultures in the partnership. It should be noted that the coordinators all stayed with CSERP and recognized how crucial their role was in supporting the research and knowledge mobilization mandate of CSERP. As CSERP winds down, some of the coordinators are using their experience to pursue academic careers, use newly acquired research and writing skills to publish articles of their own, or seek further community-university research assignments. As members of a community-university research partnership endeavor, their practice has been enriched by the six years spent with CSERP.

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AFTERWORD

Edward T. Jackson

Now, what about the medium term?

The social economy and its champions in both the community and the academy seem well-prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the short term. Rich in insight and innovation, the chapters of this book testify to how non-profit organizations and social movements have strengthened their ties with and understandings of engaged scholars and higher education institutions. Building and nurturing community-university partnerships in the social economy is neither simple nor easy, but it is supremely worthwhile, and it is, as this book shows, very feasible. Achieving significant benefits for and by the community side of the partnership is even more difficult, but it too is possible, as again this volume demonstrates.

The experience of the Canadian Social Economy Partnerships displayed all the features of a successful development intervention: commitment, resilience, creativity, flexibility, decentralized decision-making, distributed governance, and much more. Where there were obstacles and conflict, the parties worked hard to generate new solutions. Sometimes they were successful, and sometimes not. But, overall, they stayed together. And staying together permits the partners to keep working at their mission, trying new methods, learning, and adjusting as they proceed forward while, just as important, recording and examining what has not worked. Staying together also optimizes the "corporate memory" of the partners to transfer to successive leaders and participants the hard lessons learned of what doesn't work, and what does. Such corporate memory matters especially because removing *institutionalized* obstacles to real partnership and community benefit takes longer than one project cycle of five or six years. It can take ten, or 15, or even 25 years, the latter essentially constituting the length of one generation.

In fact, the long term future of the social economy appears to be solid. First, by its very nature, it is historically durable. As Ian MacPherson notes in his introductory chapter, the social economy's presence in western nations can be traced back at least 100 years. Its robust mission of meeting the needs of workers and citizens on the margins of society has meant that, since capitalism (also by definition) always marginalizes certain groups, social-economy initiatives have consistently found a constituency, and sometimes have spawned large-scale, game-changing social action like the Coady and Désjardins cooperative movements. Second, powerful macro-level forces will ensure that local livelihood solutions will be more important than ever before in this 21st century.

What isn't as clear, however, are the *medium term* prospects for community-university partnerships in this field, and for the social economy as a whole. In this context, medium term refers to a time horizon of five to 15 years. True, the social-economy sector in Quebec, with its corporatist politics and apex institutions, has gained impressive critical mass, and is building a permanent and substantial capital asset base for the sector. Yet the social economy in the rest of Canada, generally speaking, remains small, fragile and fragmented, despite the gains made through CSERP and many other energetic and innovative projects and networks, and the capacities of a handful of institutions, notably VanCity Credit Union. This lack of critical mass leaves the sector vulnerable to the effects of the global and national forces that are now reshaping the mainstream Canadian economy. Indeed, these are forces that dwarf by many orders of magnitude Canada's entire economy, let alone its regional social-economy sectors.

What forces exactly? The main driver is China's steady, almost inevitable, rise toward global economic supremacy. By 2025, it could achieve this target. With the precipitous decline of the United States' economy, and serious trouble in the Eurozone, the Middle Kingdom is, in many respects, *already* the dominant global economic actor. Accompanying China's rise is a parallel increase in the economic momentum and influence of other new powers, especially India, Brazil, Russia, Korea and Indonesia. Remarkably, the World Bank (2011) predicts that these countries will account for more than half of all global economic growth by 2025. By then, says the Bank, the world currency will be based on a blend of the US dollar, the Euro and the Chinese Yuan. And so-called emerging markets (they obviously have emerged, with an economic vengeance) and developing countries, which currently hold two-thirds of the world's foreign exchange, will in 15 years own even more of the debt of western nations.

All of this would be mildly interesting, analytically arcane even, except that these changes have, and will continue to, radically reshape national and local economies around the world, including Canada's. (The fact that Canada's entire population is about equivalent to that of a medium-sized Chinese province is both enlightening and sobering.) During the past 15 years, and the past five years in particular, central Canada has lost hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs to the low-cost production centres of the new powers and their supply-chain satellite countries. The vapourization of these Canadian jobs has eliminated good salaries and benefits that had sustained middle class households in Ontario and Quebec, and also in centres like Winnipeg and Halifax, over two and sometimes three generations. This now "missing middle" has deepened economic insecurity, already high, among more Canadians. And this affects not just those in the secondary sector of manufacturing, but also businesses and workers that sell the services and products that middle-class employees have normally purchased, especially houses, automobiles and appliances.

In fact, a key feature of the recent economic history of Canada has been the rise of the "precariat," a large and growing pool of workers who rely on contingent or contract work, with no job security or benefits (see Standing, 2009, 2011). Canadians often take on two or three such jobs at the same time, just to make ends meet. Furthermore, the growth of the precariat has been accompanied by a growing underclass in Canada: citizens who have given up looking for work altogether, who are only tentatively linked to the formal economy, who may come from successive generations of welfare recipients, who more frequently turn to crime as a solution, and who are mercilessly targeted for drug sales and gang recruitment by organized crime.

Question: What's driving the Canadian economy now? Answer: Energy-sector resource extraction in the west, particularly the Alberta tar sands, uranium in Saskatchewan and natural gas in British Columbia (together with some smaller oil and gas production off the east coast). Canada has essentially returned to its traditional role of providing foreign empires with raw natural resources: first for France and England, later for the United States, and now for China. Without retaining value-added processing and refining jobs in Canada (and, at the same time, addressing the environmental and social challenges associated with large-scale extraction), this is a vacuous, reckless and wasteful strategy that does little for most Canadian workers and communities, and certainly does very little for our national sovereignty. Next up is our most precious resource: water. How much do the Americans and the Chinese want? What is our plan?

Add to all of this another domestic factor: that of an extended stretch of conservative politics at the national level. By 2015, the Harper Conservatives will have held either minority or majority power federally in Canada for nearly a decade. And they will continue to win elections into the next decade if the political centre-left fails to find a way to reduce, or eliminate altogether, vote splitting between the Liberal and the New Democratic parties. This would take a merger, a coalition, or tactical cooperation of some kind between these parties.

In the meantime, the Conservatives are certain to make major changes, including a lot of cuts, to social and regional programs that were built during decades of Liberal federal rule. These cuts will form the core of an ideological campaign to reduce the size of government, reduce taxes, undermine the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and embed conservative social and fiscal values into mainstream politics and culture. The Conservatives have many allies, and major resources, to help them conduct this campaign, from right-wing think tanks in the US and Canada, to the grassroots networks of the religious right, to mass media owned by explicitly conservative interests. Under the parliamentary majority they will hold for at least four years, the Tories can do serious damage to the apparatus of the welfare state. In fact, they signaled the beginning of this campaign while in minority status, by eliminating funding for progressive

aid groups like Kairos and for feminist organizations, as well. As I write, the government is undertaking what is, almost clinically, termed "program review," a non-transparent, stealth search of targets for spending reductions, while it polls internally on what cuts will draw the greatest outcry from which constituencies. Spring 2012 will bring a budget that will show the true colours, and the ideological game-plan, of the Harper regime.

And make no mistake: a regime it is. Centralized power in the Prime Minister's Office, rigid parliamentary discipline, the marginalization of bureaucratic advice, the silencing of its government managers and experts, and the freezing out of critical journalists—these are all features of present-day official Ottawa. (They are also features of authoritarian governments everywhere, but that's another story.) All of this is new to civil-society actors like the leaders and activists in the social economy. Under Liberal governments, since World War II, there was sufficient space and funding to develop a reasonably productive relationship between civil society and the state. And there was room for critical engagement of the government by non-governmental actors without the threat of their state funding being terminated. Not so today.

So, in the medium term, then, the champions of the social economy face two conditions that they have not faced in the modern era: first, a mainstream economy that has been restructured, probably forever, by the rise of the new global powers, and, second, the likelihood of an ideologically conservative federal government for as many as eight years (that is, two terms), and maybe longer. Under these conditions, what strategies and tactics will work for the social economy in its relations with the market and the state? What capacities does the social-economy sector need to develop in order to succeed in this new era? These questions have gained urgency as economic conditions have worsened in the developed world.

Moreover, there is a third condition that is new. With its base in western Canada and rural Ontario, the Conservative Party demonstrated in the 2011 federal election that it doesn't need Quebec to win a majority. Indeed, to underscore this point, some of the early symbolic moves of the majority government seemed intended to rebuke Quebec voters for their anti-Tory electoral behaviour, such as re-attaching the descriptor "Royal" to the front of the names of the Canadian navy and air force. In the past, the social-economy sector has levered "the Quebec factor" in order to gain financial support from the federal government. The short-lived but well-designed 2004-2005 Social Economy program of the Martin Liberals—and the funding window for CSERP—was the result of a sustained campaign driven by Quebec's Chantier de l'économie sociale, in cooperation with the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (Jackson, 2008). However, while Liberal governments were sensitive to such Quebec-led lobbying, the Harper Conservatives, apparently, are not.

So, what should social economy leaders do about all this? What should their plan be for the medium term? In my view, they should devote serious attention to five priorities over the next ten to 15 years:

1. *Experimenting with practical alliances with Conservatives at the local level.* Working closely with municipalities, economic development corporations, civic leaders and local businesses, social-economy organizations can test ways of working with Conservative actors and identifying short-term common ground that can be projectized. English-Canadian social-economy activists have often built such multi-stakeholder working relationships, and can perhaps offer lessons to their colleagues in Quebec.
2. *Working inside and outside partisan politics to bring together the centre-left.* The retaking of political control of the federal state must be a priority for social-economy champions. There is no possibility of a mature, comprehensive relationship with a national government without a decisive political shift to the centre-left in the House of Commons. The social economy sector needs to work closely on policy platforms, and then program implementation plans, with the NDP, the Liberals and also the Greens. Perhaps some leaders in the social economy will opt to run for federal office; this would be a welcome development.
3. *Organizing the precariat.* One of the opportunities for social-economy organizations is to become advocates for the precariat, pushing for better working conditions, creating insurance plans for dental, disability and other coverage, and lobbying for public-policy change to reduce the economic insecurity that plagues this group of Canadians. This work could also result in social-economy organizations becoming mass-membership organizations and increasing their clout with governments of all stripes.
4. *Demonstrating job quantity and job quality through large-scale social enterprise.* Social–economy champions must turn their attention to building large-scale, social-purpose businesses. VanCity Credit Union, Gay Lea Foods, Mountain Equipment Co-op—the co-operative and credit union sectors offer numerous examples of achieving scale. International cases, like that of the Mondragon system of 100 industrial co-operatives in Spain's Basque region, take on new importance in today's volatile world economy, and are worthy of re-examination (see MacLeod, 1998). Closer to home, in the US, arc welder-maker Lincoln Electric is a publicly traded company that provides profit sharing for its workers and has not laid off any full-time employees in 100 years, and is another model worth investigating and adapting (Koller, 2010).
5. *Mobilizing new forms of capital.* Finally, social-economy organizations should take energetic steps to diversify their sources of financing in general (Jackson, 2010), and find new ways of mobilizing private capital in particular. The recent report of the Canadian Task Force on Social Finance (2011) presents a series of recommendations designed to increase the flow of equity and debt

capital from private pools into social enterprises and funds. These measures include institutional target-setting, regulatory and policy changes and new product development. Social-economy leaders should build on the work of VanCity Credit Union, the Social-Economy Trust of the Chantier in Quebec, and other major initiatives to create and then access such new sources of capital that generate both financial and social returns that are measurable and significant. The field of social finance, or impact investing, is growing worldwide (see Bugg-Levine and Emerson, 2011), and there is strength in joining this global force for local economic solutions.

There is, therefore, much to be done. And it will take courage, will and energy to do it. But there is also much to build on. Thanks to important ventures like CSERP, knowledge, innovation and commitment all run deep in the social-economy sector—as does the experience of partnership. It is time for social-economy champions in the community and the academy to set about preparing for the new conditions that they will face in the next 10 to 15 years. As with all things important, there is no time like the present to get started.

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APPENDIX A1

Structure of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships

Canadian Social Economy Hub

The national Hub was co-directed by the then Director of the British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies at the University of Victoria (the Principal Investigator for the project), and the then Executive Director of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, which then had its national offices in Victoria. The staff, located at the University of Victoria, consisted of between three to eight people, many of them students on part-time appointments. The structure of the Hub animated the community-university research alliance by resourcing activities led by both university and community based staff and partners.

As originally envisioned, the Hub's main purposes were to:

- Encourage synergies among the regional nodes.
- Help the nodes avoid duplication and deepen research possibilities.
- Create National Facilitating Committees to address key issues for the SE Suite.
- Develop a rich database and communication system to inform Canadians and facilitate research.
- Deepen relationships among post-secondary institutions, communities and community developers within the Social Economy field.
- Selectively pursue research projects needed to integrate the research results of regional nodes and deepen understandings of the Social Economy.
- Collaborate with regional nodes and partnering organisations in providing opportunities to enhance public understanding of the Social Economy and foster discussions about it.
- Ensure that policy issues are addressed systematically throughout the five-year process through position and research papers communicated to public servants, politicians and community groups.
- Work with the regional nodes, partners, the academy and professional organisations to ensure that understandings and training in the Social Economy are better entrenched within Canadian research and teaching programmes.

- Support workshops, conferences and public forums on the Social Economy, collaborating as much as possible with regional nodes and partnering organizations in doing so.
- Liaise with organizations and individuals in other countries with an interest in research into the Social Economy.

The Hub operates a website, manages a national programme for students and young people interested in the Social Economy, operates telelearning sessions, undertakes a knowledge mobilization programme, and organizes conferences. It undertakes research on a project basis, as funding permits, focusing on projects and activities of general interest to the Partnerships or to assist in projects underway within the Nodes. The Hub has an advisory committee on national policy research and directs a national research project on public policy to strengthen the Social Economy in Canada, with international comparative analysis that links up researchers and practitioner organizations across the globe. The Hub was envisioned as a place where the Nodes and the Canada Research Chair in the Social Economy (Professor Marie Bouchard from the Université de Québec à Montréal) could exchange ideas and findings and develop research and conference activities.

Each node has a representative and an alternate on the Advisory Board. In addition, the Hub serves as a meeting place for national organizations involved in the Social Economy. They include the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (which also partners in the general management of the Hub), *Le chantier de l'économie sociale,* the Canadian Co-operative Association, Le conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité, Imagine Canada, CIRIEC Canada, the Co-operatives Secretariat, the Women's Economic Council, the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. In addition there are four international observers (from Japan, the United Kingdom, Argentina, and the United States), who attend at least one meeting of the Advisory Board each year, usually coinciding with a conference or other event in which CSERP was involved.

APPENDIX A2

BC and Alberta Node (BALTA)

The BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA) is a regional research collaboration amongst community-based organizations, universities and colleges in Alberta and British Columbia, Canada, with an interest in the social economy. At present, BALTA and its research projects include researchers from: 11 Alberta and BC universities and colleges (Athabasca University, Mount Royal University, Royal Roads University, Selkirk College, Simon Fraser University, St. Joseph's Theological College, University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, University of the Fraser Valley and University of Victoria) and 20 social economy sector organizations. Researchers from several universities and organizations outside Alberta and BC - including other provinces, the U.S. and the U.K. – have also been involved as research collaborators.

BALTA's mandate involves researching various aspects of the social economy with a view to both increasing knowledge about the sector and identifying ways to strengthen and expand the sector.

BALTA was somewhat of an exception to the general CURA pattern of university-led and based projects. It was led by a community-based organization, the Canadian Center for Community Renewal. It involved multiple, sector-based organizations and academic institutions. The participating social economy practitioners and academics worked together in a balanced partnership where both had full say in the research and other work that BALTA did.

BALTA also operated as an entity in its own right, with a clearly distinct identity, not as just a project of the lead institution. This was reflected in its structures, decision-making, and public communication. Equitable representation and voice in decision making between the practitioner and academic components of BALTA were fundamental principles. This was reflected in BALTA's structures. The BALTA steering committee which had overall responsibility for overall guidance of the BALTA programme, was made up of three practitioner representatives, three academic representatives and a student representative.

With its strong commitment to co-construction of the research programme, decision making at all phases of the process included both practitioners and academics. Much of this took place in the three Social Economy Research Clusters (SERCs), each bringing together a mix of university and community

based researchers and social economy practitioners, with both an academic and a practitioner co-chair. The three SERCs are focused on the following themes.

- SERC 1 — Social Enterprises in Human Services and Affordable Housing
- SERC 2 — The Social Economy in Rural Revitalization and Development
- SERC 3 — Analysis, Evaluation and Infrastructure Development

A fourth team focused on mapping and portraiture related to the social economy.

While individual researchers lead specific research projects, the priorities for BALTA's research and annual research and dissemination/mobilizations work plans were developed and approved by the SERCs. While many of the research projects were then led by academics, practitioners also led a significant number; an increasingly common pattern in the later years of BALTA was for projects to be co-led by both an academic and a practitioner. There was considerable flexibility between the teams, with researchers from SERC sometimes initiating projects that overlapped with the mandates of other SERCs or leading research projects that were under the auspices of other SERCS. There were also some projects that operated under the auspices of more than one SERC and were classified as "cross-cutting" research.

The intent from the beginning was that BALTA would be guided by a broad and unifying strategic vision, but that each team would have significant latitude within that broad vision to develop its own research priorities and specific research projects. The original BALTA proposal to SSHRC laid out broad objectives and the priority themes reflected in the SERC structure. This strategic orientation was further developed in two important working papers developed by the BALTA steering committee during the first year:

- *Mapping the social economy in BC and Alberta: Towards a strategic approach* (which addressed definitional and conceptual issues), and
- *Building a social economy research platform: Towards a strategic decision making approach with the BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance* (which further elaborated the research questions laid out in the proposal to SSHRC and established some criteria for approval of research proposals).

APPENDIX A3

Atlantic Node: The Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network

The Atlantic Node of the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships, otherwise known as the SES/ÉSD Network, was premised on an active partnership – with a focus on research and dissemination activities and in the governance of the Network. Atlantic Node members worked within academic institutions, community organizations and all levels of government. The original group, approximately 100 team members, coalesced within six research groups (or sub-nodes) across the four Atlantic provinces, which included more than 30 students contributing to research work. At the end of five years, the Atlantic Node team had grown to approximately 250 members, almost 100 of which were students completing thesis work or engaged as research assistants/participants in Node and Sub-node activities. The SSHRC funding of the Network helped the team leverage other funding, all of which supported graduate student research assistantships, research activities with community partner organizations, conference and other presentations, knowledge generation and mobilization, along with other Network activities and communications, including several meetings in the region hosting the full Atlantic Node team.

Atlantic Node Goals

- Contributing to the theory and practice of social economy in the Atlantic region.
- Internal bridging, bonding, mentoring and capacity building.
- Encouraging use of the "social economy" as a framing concept in the region.
- Linking Atlantic partners with other parts of Canada and the world.

The Atlantic Node Principal Investigator (PI), or Node Director, was located at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. The Atlantic Node had six sub-nodes, which were linked to its research themes and afforded representation in each of the four Atlantic Provinces. Each of these sub-nodes had a SN Coordinator, or a team of two Co-coordinators. The Node had a four member Management Committee, comprised of two community and two academic partners, including the PI. The Node Steering Committee was comprised of each of the Sub-node Coordinators (or their alternates), the PI, and the only other community partner who was part of the Management Committee but not a Sub-node coordinator. In addition, those who were coordinating key pieces of node-

level work were, at times, invited to participate in Steering Committee meetings – the Chair of the Self-Evaluation Committee, the Chair of the Policy Research Committee, and members of the Mobilization Working Group. If an alternate for a SN Coordinator was required for a Node Steering Committee meeting, academics replaced community partners, and vice versa, wherever possible. The Atlantic Node team was required to partner an academic and a community partner for all of the 50+ research projects it completed, and each sub-node reviewed and approved its own series of research project proposals addressing one of the main research themes. Members of the Network contributed to a book of peer-reviewed papers addressing the Network's research themes, (the book is forthcoming through Cape Breton University Press). In addition, the Network's Coordinator, with participation from many of the community partners, completed a book of profiles of these organizations *(Mapping the social economy of Atlantic Canada: Profiles of community partners in the Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network, 2005-2010 – MSVU, 2011).*

APPENDIX A4

Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada (SERNNoCa)

The North, as outlined by the Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada (SERNNoCa), is a large geographic area with a very diverse population, many different cultural groups and languages. The area of study includes the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador. Such a vast regional span poses challenges for operating as a research node of the Social Economy Suite. Coordinating any activity across the North requires the support and guidance of many people in order to meet the needs and interests of this broad area. There were many unique considerations for the coordination of the Northern Node of the Social Economy Research Network. Being part of a National research network was one of the key supports for successful operations of this research network. The National office was instrumental in providing key background information, ongoing supports as well as suggestions for communications and facilitation of the program. The Hub, as this was called, provided a central base from which coordinated efforts across the nodes could be facilitated. This office was essential to providing some common ground for the nodes while still allowing each to develop and research topics that were of most relevance to their location. Providing a contextual framework for the social economy was necessary to help the Northern Network formulate our understanding and develop our studies for the North. This helped to provide an understanding of aspects to examine in the northern social economy and how we could highlight similarities and differences that exist across the North and with other parts of Canada.

A full time coordinator was located at the Northern Node base at Yukon College. This was the first step in the process for developing a more dedicated research facility at Yukon College with the capacity to serve as a SSHRC eligible institution. With this assignment came a host of new requirements for Yukon College but it also opened the doors for future research opportunities and developments. It was only possible with the support provided by the PI and other university partners in the program and their recognition of the value of having the research driven from the North rather than the long existing scenario of all northern research coming from southern universities. A vision was necessary to change this model for research in the North. This research program was the first time that a territorial college had the opportunity to establish their eligibility as an institution for SSHRC funding and this in itself, although a lengthy process, paved the way for the future of social science research in the North. Since receiving this

eligibility one of the faculty of Yukon College was awarded a SSHRC Northern Research Development Program grant for a cultural history project in the Yukon.

To establish SSHRC eligibility Yukon College was required to provide documentation including the necessary policy and procedures for management of funds, an institutional research ethics policy and a research ethics board, an institutional policy on integrity, Association of Canadian Community Colleges membership, a research mandate and demonstrated research activity in the social sciences and humanities. The policies and procedures had to be reviewed and approved by SSHRC. As the Yukon College Research Ethics Board was not yet in place the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board agreed to serve as the Board for purposes of reviewing research projects associated with SERNNoCa. Changes occurred for the financial administration of the research projects to ensure that all funds allocated to researchers complied with the Tri-Council requirements for the use of the funds. The coordinator was responsible for administering much of the financial requirements of this SSHRC grant and assisted the College in its development in this area including the annual report.

Although the term social economy was not widely used in Northern Canada, the ideas and relationships were found to be the foundation of what others in the research network were referring to as social economy and were prevalent throughout the North. Our core members were located throughout Canada with the Network Steering Committee composed of:

- PI and Theme I coordinator - (Lakehead University),
- 3 theme coordinators as co-directors,
- Representative of each of the 3 territorial colleges, and
- Community partners representatives (include Labrador Institute, Labrador; Makivik Corporation, Nunavik, and Arctic Cooperatives Ltd.)

In addition to the network coordinator there was also a part time coordinator established in the Northwest Territories and another part-time position in Nunavut. This provided local points of contact and resource centres for the social economy research. Having territorial coordinators at the Northern Research Institutes facilitated the development of research partnerships, equipped graduate students with a greater understanding of requirements and procedures for doing their research in the North, and enhanced the communication and involvement of community groups in the research process. These coordinators provided faculty-community research connections, facilitated knowledge transfer exchanges, and undertook project development. The territorial colleges have a network of campuses and learning centres and a wide range of community partners providing a presence in many of the communities. This structure enhanced the opportunities to connect with many groups throughout the North including First Nations and Inuit organizations, as well as social economy groups.

The Network Coordinator and other territorial coordinators were ex-officio, non-voting members of the committee but provided local and regional insights into the needs and interests of community organizations. The Committee met at least 4 times per year; every 2-3 months by teleconference and one face-to-face meeting annually to review projects, work plans and achievements, review the budget, conduct evaluations, allocate the shared resources of the project, plan and execute dissemination activities and capacity building and other issues that arose. The Network Coordinator provided regular feedback to the PI to ensure that issues and requirements were met in conjunction with the recommendations from the Committee and the requirements for SSHRC. The Steering Committee recommended protocols for issues such as shared allocation of resources, other sources of funding, relationships with researchers and projects outside the Network and other matters pertaining to the activities of the Node. The Node Coordinator did the day-to-day coordination and financial administration of Network activities.

APPENDIX A5

Southern Ontario: Social Economy Center at OISE

The Community-University Research Alliance for Southern Ontario's Social Economy aims at enhancing capacity for ongoing research and development about the social economy. A joint initiative of the University of Toronto and its community partners, Imagine Canada and the Ontario Co-operative Association, our Research Alliance is comprised of leading scholars and practitioners from 11 southern Ontario universities, 30 plus community organizations, and scholars from seven universities outside the region. The initiative creates a Southern Ontario network of social economy researchers and practitioners organized into five clusters: 1) mapping the size and scope of the social economy in this region; 2) understanding the impact of the social economy; 3) improving the capacity of social economy organizations to demonstrate the value of their activities; 4) developing public policy; and 5) extending theory. In total, 36 projects were completed.

The governance structure is very simple, consisting of the Principal Investigator, the Coordinator, two representatives from the community partners and an academic from a partner university. The Executive Committee has worked together from the development of the proposal through to the present. It has functioned consensually in monthly meetings that have planned the activities of the Research Alliance.

In addition to the research sub-projects, we also held a monthly speakers' series and webcast; a workshop/certificate program; spearheaded the OSER (Ontario Social Economy Roundtable) group; founded an academic association (Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research) and a journal; maintained an active Website; created a series of online fact sheets and backgrounders; published a textbook for business schools, and compiled three edited books based on the research conducted through the Alliance.

APPENDIX A6

Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan Node: Linking, Learning, Leveraging: Social Enterprises, Knowledgeable Economies and Sustainable Communities

Our project represents the Northern Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan Regional Node of the SSHRC-funded Social Economy Suite. The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives located at the University of Saskatchewan manages the Node. The director of the Centre is the Principal Investigator and Project Director.

Drawing on the skills of 60 academic partners representing 10 disciplines and 14 Canadian and American universities, and working in collaboration with over 70 community partners from across Canada, the USA, and beyond, the research of the Northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan Node builds on the foundational work and capacities of the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) at the University of Saskatchewan, the Institute of Urban Studies/Winnipeg Inner City Research Alliance (WIRA) at the University of Winnipeg, the Community Economic and Social Development Unit (CESD) at Algoma University, and the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives (CSC) at the University of Saskatchewan. Each regional partner employed a community liaison officer to work with community partners to facilitate the successful completion of the projects.

The project provided support and valuable experience for almost 70 students. Research results have been shared through articles, presentations, seminars, workshops, meetings, training sessions, and a museum exhibition, which is in preparation to become four traveling exhibits.

Across the three provinces, we have five themed research clusters: Social Enterprise Development (Cluster 1), Financing Strategies for Social Enterprise Development (Cluster 2), Governance of the Social Economy (Cluster 3), Measuring and Mapping the Social Economy (Cluster 4), and Developing Policy Frameworks for the Social Economy (Cluster 5). The research clusters selected two co-directors – one being an academic co-director and the other selected from the representatives of the community partner organizations.

Governance for the project followed a de-centralized approach with many of the activities and resource allocation decisions being made at the level of the cluster co-leads and the regional partners: Saskatchewan (CUISR), Manitoba

(Institute of Urban Studies / WIRA), and Northern Ontario (CESD). The Management Board for the overall project was comprised of the PI, the community and academic co-leads of the clusters, and the directors of the provincial organizations. There were also two international members on the management board who offered outside perspectives and recommendations.

Administrative tasks for the entire project were the responsibility of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives. The librarian at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives was the coordinator for this node. She created and managed the website, coordinated data collection and reporting to SSHRC, arranged meetings, fielded (or "responded to") questions, and commandeered communications among the many people involved in the overall project. Approximately 60% of her time was spent on the social economy project.

Other staff at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives provided considerable support for the project, including the massive task of synthesizing the work coming out of the node and creating a professional museum quality exhibition, showcasing the research results. Our Centre's editor and publications specialist invested numerous hours formatting and frequently editing each report coming out of the project, as well as undertaking much of the development of the exhibit and editing and formatting of newsletters and reports to SSHRC. Our Centre's outreach and engagement coordinator devoted many hours of his time to project activities, including planning and coordinating conferences, applying for grants to support the traveling exhibits, and devoted numerous hours to developing and working with the exhibit and events relating to it. Our Centre's IT specialist contributed considerable time on website needs, including the creation of our online version of the exhibit. Our Centre's office manager and our office assistant contributed much time to administrative matters relating to the project. Summer students provided additional administrative support.

One of the most exciting activities to arise from our node's research results was the exhibition of research results prepared by the staff at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives in partnership with the Diefenbaker Canada Centre, entitled, *"Building Community: Creating Social and Economic Well-Being."* The exhibition features four interrelated modules: Building Sustainable Communities, Building Enterprising Communities, Building Engaged Communities, and Building Inclusive Communities. The exhibit was on display in the Diefenbaker Canada Centre Museum from May to October of 2010 and during that time more than 3,500 individuals including 60 school groups making up 1,700 students toured the exhibit. Arrangements are being made to tour the entire exhibit as a whole at upcoming local, national, and international events and, in particular, at events celebrating the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives in 2012. Several organizations have expressed interest. Plans are also underway to break the exhibit down

into three traveling exhibits that will tour for two years through each of the three provinces involved in the research. In addition, there will be one or two themed books synthesizing the results of the research coming out of our node, as well as many more articles and presentations.

APPENDIX A7

Québec Node: The Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale (ARUC-ÉS) and the Réseau québécois de recherche partenariale en économie sociale (RQRP-ÉS)

The Goals of ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS are:

- to lead social-economy related research and to produce knowledge that is useful to community development by coordinating networks of researchers and community partners;
- to stimulate and support social-economy related education by organizing workshops and involving students in all activities;
- to disseminate research findings by issuing various publications and organizing seminars, conferences, and conventions; and
- to promote the sharing of knowledge between universities and communities and the use of research findings within the social economy movement.

This desire to bring the spheres of research and action closer together is reflected in how ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS are organized. Both centres are jointly headed by a Professor from the Sociology Department at UQAM and the head of the *Chantier de l'économie sociale.* A representative of the academy and a representative from the social economy sector supervises work teams. This same collaboration is found on governing bodies (management teams, coordinating committees, research teams, etc.).

Two Complementary Structures

While ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS have a common research focus and approach, what distinguish them are the spheres of action of their respective work teams: ARUC-ÉS's teams are dealing with issues related to different sectors of the social economy (housing, social tourism, finance, services for people, development), while RQRP-ÉS teams work on these issues but on a territorial basis.

ARUC-ÉS coordinates five partnered activity teams *(chantiers d'activités partenariales* - CAPs) that focus on five work areas: services for individuals;

community housing; recreation and social tourism; responsible financing; and local and regional development.

In the spring of 2006, the groups were engaged in more than 50 active research projects. The following illustrate the variety of issues that are being addressed in the different fields.

- Portrait of the co-operative housing movement in Québec.
- Factors affecting access to recreation.
- The role of the social economy in reconverting the garment industry: The path to developing new job skills.
- Marketing practices of social economy businesses.
- Mergers among health and social services establishments.

What is the future mandate and mission of the *Centre local de services communautaires* (CLSC)? Research findings are published in booklets that are added to the *Cahiers de l'ARUC-ÉS* series, and are presented at seminars and conferences.

The RQRP-ÉS consists of eight regional partnered activity groups - *Groupes régionaux d'activités partenariales* (GRAPs) that are set up in regions of Québec with a university: Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Outaouais, Estrie, Montréal, Mauricie, Québec/Chaudiere-Appalaches, Saguenay/Lac-Saint-Jean, and Bas-Saint-Laurent. Bringing together the social economy hub and the local university in each region, the GRAPs organize their research programs in response to the locally identified social economy research needs.

In the spring of 2006, RQRP-ÉS was involved in coordinating more than 20 research projects. The following are examples of issues that are being dealt within five of the eight regions covered by GRAPs.

- The contribution of the social economy to rural development: The case of Bas-Saint-Laurent,
- Linking income support policies and workforce development in Montréal,
- Conditions for the emergence of social economy businesses in Saguenay/Lac-Saint-Jean,
- A portrait of the social economy in the Mauricie region, and
- Inventory, benefits, and the contribution of community gardens to the regional economy in the Québec/Chaudière-Appalaches regions.

Leading partners in ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS:

- Association des groupes de ressources techniques du Québec

- Chantier de l'économie sociale
- Comité sectoriel de la main-d'oeuvre en économie sociale et en action communautaire (CSMO-ÉSAC)
- Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
- Conseil québécois du loisir
- Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)
- Fondaction de la CSN
- Fonds de solidarité de la FTQ
- Pôles régionaux d'économie sociale
- Réseau d'investissement social du Québec (RISQ)
- Concordia University
- Université de Sherbrooke
- Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC)
- Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)
- Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR)
- Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR)
- Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscaminque (UQAT)
- Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO)
- Université Laval

APPENDIX B

The Québec Node Coordinator's Reflection on Community-University Research Partnerships

Denis Bussières, Coordonnateur RQRP-ÉS

La coordination d'une alliance de recherche: quelques remarques sur une démarche innovatrice en recherché.[1]

Au cours des dix dernières années, nous avons travaillé comme coordonnateur entre 2000 et 2005, au sein de l'Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale (ARUC-ÉS) et par la suite entre 2005-2010 au Réseau québécois de recherche partenariale en économie sociale (RQRP-ÉS), une des constituantes du Centre canadien d'économie sociale. Dans le cadre de ce texte, nous allons présenter quelques modes de fonctionnement issus de notre expérience de coordination et qui permettent de tisser des liens entre le monde de la recherche et celui de la pratique. Les connaissances ne se transmettent pas par intraveineuse, il faut y consacrer du temps et adopter des modes de fonctionnement qui peuvent assurer les conditions minimales pour une bonne transmission.

Lorsque l'on parle de transfert de connaissance ou de mobilisation des connaissances, selon les auteurs les termes varient,[2] un certain nombre de barrières surgissent dans la tête tant des chercheurs que des praticiens. Certains parleront de deux mondes différents, de langages incompréhensibles, de traduction, d'outils de transfert inadéquats, d'un mauvais synchronisme, bref les obstacles semblent s'accumuler sur le chemin du transfert et de la mobilisation des connaissances.

À partir de notre expérience, nous estimons qu'une démarche de recherche partenariale bien comprise et mise en œuvre avec rigueur apporte des solutions aux nombreuses difficultés soulevées plus haut. Ce qui nous apparaît fondamental, c'est qu'il faut cesser de voir les résultats de recherche comme des produits qui seraient accessibles aux praticiens comme des boîtes de conserve dans un supermarché et se concentrer sur le processus et les interrelations qui sont mis en action dans la recherche.[3]

De quoi parlons-nous

Un premier constat, c'est qu'il y a recherche partenariale et recherche partenariale, sous ce vocable se dissimule toutes sortes de processus de recherche

en partenariat où le partenariat est plus ou moins actif. Pour simplifier la discussion, notons qu'il y a des recherches où l'on fait appel à des praticiens pour trouver un champ d'investigation et d'autres où les praticiens sont parties prenantes dans l'ensemble des différentes étapes du processus de recherche. C'est ce que nous appelons la coconstruction des connaissances. Entre ces deux extrêmes, le partenariat se conjugue sous différents niveaux d'intensité.

La coconstruction des connaissances nécessite un échange constant entre praticiens et chercheurs dans toutes les étapes de réalisation de la recherche qui va de la définition du problème à la diffusion des résultats. Ces échanges entre praticiens et chercheurs se réalisent dans le cadre d'un comité de suivi de la recherche. Lorsque nous parlons de recherche partenariale, c'est de ce processus dont nous parlons.[4]

Quelques raisons qui militent en faveur de la recherche partenariale

Rappelons que le défi à relever pour la recherche partenariale est de combler le fossé entre chercheurs et praticiens afin que les connaissances développées dans le cadre de différentes recherches puissent mieux circuler dans le monde de la pratique et nourrir les réflexions des praticiens sur leur action et ainsi participer aux changements sociaux. Notre expérience au sein de l'ARUC-ÉS et du RQRP-ÉS, les nombreux échanges que nous avons eus avec chercheurs et praticiens et nos lectures sur ce sujet nous portent à conclure que la coconstruction des connaissances et la voie première pour combler le fossé. Pourquoi donc?

Une définition commune de la problématique

La très grande majorité des auteurs qui ont écrits sur la recherche partenariale en encore sur community based research soulignent que la participation des praticiens à la définition de la problématique de recherche est une condition importante pour assurer une diffusion des résultats et une intégration de ces résultats aux réflexions des organisations et praticiens sur leur pratique. La raison est simple, en participant à la définition du problème, les praticiens confirment leur intérêt à la recherche, celle-ci rejoint leurs préoccupations et celles de leur organisation; elle s'inscrit ainsi dans leur univers de réflexion. Si nous insistons sur la dimension réflexion, c'est que rarement la recherche apporte une solution concrète à un problème. De plus, le choix d'une solution fait aussi appel à d'autres considérations que des considérations techniques. Il y a des dimensions politiques, organisationnelles, monétaires pour ne nommer que celles-là qui interviennent dans le choix d'une action ou d'une solution particulière. La recherche et ses résultats viennent donc s'inscrire comme un élément de réflexion parmi d'autres qui influenceront la prise de décision.

La participation des praticiens à la définition de la problématique permet de mieux cerner la problématique à étudier. Par leur connaissance du terrain, des acteurs, des organisations et des différents enjeux (politiques, financiers, administratifs) les praticiens permettent à une recherche de bien s'orienter, de rejoindre des préoccupations importances sur le terrain et facilitent grandement l'accès à des informations clées. Nous n'irons pas aussi loin qu'un participant à un colloque américain sur la recherche partenariale qui mentionnait « If the grant is already written, then it's too late »[5], mais les chercheurs devront convaincre les praticiens de la pertinence de leur sujet de recherche s'ils veulent s'assurer d'une écoute active de la part des praticiens. La codéfinition du problème résout en grande partie la question de la pertinence.

Sans cette codéfinition, les résultats de la recherche n'en seront pas pour autant sans valeur, mais la diffusion de ces résultats deviendra une véritable course à obstacles pour le chercheur. Est-ce que sa recherche à de l'intérêt pour les praticiens? Est-ce qu'elle correspond aux enjeux présents sur le terrain? Est-ce que des praticiens sont prêts à défendre les résultats auprès de leurs confrères et consoeurs? Voilà une série de questions auxquelles il lui faudra répondre avant d'assurer la diffusion de ses résultats et si l'une des réponses est non, les résultats de la recherche risquent grandement de se retrouver sur les tablettes ou d'être diffusés seulement au sein des réseaux universitaires.

L'importance des interactions

Une autre dimension pour la diffusion des résultats, c'est le développement d'interactions entre les chercheurs et les praticiens tout au long de la recherche. De là l'importance de la mise en place d'un groupe de suivi de la recherche. Ces interactions permettent de dresser des ponts entre le monde de la recherche et celui de la pratique; peu à peu, les différences de langage, de perception de la réalité s'estompent ou du moins se clarifient. La problématique de départ devient celle du groupe de suivi et l'ensemble des partenaires a à cœur la bonne conduite du projet. Dans le cadre de ces interactions, il se crée aussi une relation de confiance qui permet des échanges fructueux entre les partenaires.

Dans le groupe de suivi, chaque partenaire s'inscrit dans un mouvement de réflexion, le chercheur puisqu'il met en jeu ses connaissances théoriques et le praticien qui met aussi en jeu ses connaissances pratiques. Quoique cette différence entre connaissance théorique et connaissance pratique soit un peu fausse. Notre travail de coordonnateur nous a permis de constater que les praticiens ont souvent une connaissance théorique de la problématique par leur formation qui est souvent une formation universitaire et le chercheur a de son côté une connaissance pratique de la problématique acquise souvent par ses propres expériences de citoyen. Ainsi, la gestionnaire de CPE peut avoir une connaissance théorique de l'administration d'une organisation par sa formation

et la chercheure en administration peut avoir une connaissance pratique de l'organisation d'un CPE en tant que parente siégeant ou ayant siégé au conseil d'administration d'un CPE.

Ce qu'il faut souligner ici, c'est que personne n'est un ¨pur¨ praticien et personne n'est un ¨pur¨ théoricien. Soulignons aussi que notre expérience de coordination nous a permis de constater que parfois le fossé est plus grand entre praticiens qu'entre chercheur et praticiens. Des praticiens qui viennent d'univers différents par exemple un praticien d'un organisme communautaire par rapport un représentant d'un ministère on parfois plus de difficulté à se rejoindre dans la vision et la compréhension d'une problématique que le chercheur et le praticien qui peuvent partager des positions idéologiques communes.

Notons aussi que nous voyons de plus en plus d'anciens praticiens qui deviennent chercheurs et qui s'inscrivent dans des formations de deuxième et troisième cycle. On peut douter qu'ils ou elles perdent du jour au lendemain leur côté pratique. En fait, cette idée d'un fossé infranchissable entre le monde de la pratique et de la théorie est peut-être une excuse facile pour ne pas s'inscrire dans une démarche de réflexion.

La constitution d'un groupe de suivi de la recherche permet justement de se défaire de cette dichotomie théorie/pratique et de réunir des expériences différentes à la recherche de solutions innovantes. En s'inscrivant ensemble dans une activité de recherche, praticiens et chercheurs plongent dans un univers à la fois connu, mais aussi inconnu puisqu'ils cherchent ensemble et, sauf exception, nous cherchons ce que nous ne connaissons pas. Dans le cadre de la coconstruction des connaissances, chercheurs et praticiens mettent en jeu leurs connaissances en acceptant de se faire bousculer dans leurs certitudes tant théoriques que pratiques.

Ces interactions sont importantes aussi, car elles permettent de développer une compréhension commune, mais surtout elles amènent les praticiens à déjà traduire la problématique de recherche, la méthodologie, les résultats en un vocabulaire assimilable pour les autres praticiens. Les praticiens qui participent au comité de suivi sont les premières cibles du transfert de connaissance. Ils sont d'une certaine façon les cobayes de ce premier moment de transfert, moment important puisqu'il permettra de mieux organiser le transfert des résultats vers un public néophyte.

La diffusion des connaissances

Après l'étape de la codéfinition de la problématique à étudier, de l'étape de la coconstruction des connaissances dans le cadre d'un groupe de suivi, chaque recherche est confrontée à la diffusion de ces résultats de recherche vers différents publics cibles. La capacité de diffuser vers les praticiens nous apparaît liée à la force des liens qui se seront créés dans le cadre du travail de recherche. Pour planifier une bonne diffusion, il faut que les praticiens qui ont participé à la recherche se soient emparés des résultats. Ceux-ci ne sont plus les résultats du ou des chercheurs, mais les résultats du groupe de suivi. À la limite, on ne parle plus du transfert des chercheurs vers les praticiens, mais du transfert du groupe de suivi vers les praticiens et aussi vers d'autres chercheurs intéressés par la problématique.

La connaissance du terrain des praticiens qui ont participé activement au groupe de suivi leur permettra d'identifier les publics intéressés par les résultats, de déterminer les meilleurs outils de diffusion selon les publics visés. L'étape de la diffusion n'est plus une course à obstacles pour convaincre les praticiens de l'apport important des résultats de recherche dans leur réflexion sur leur pratique. Avec la participation active de praticiens dans le cadre du groupe de suivi, la diffusion permet de renforcer les liens entre chercheurs et praticiens et fait apparaître la recherche comme un outil pour appuyer la pratique.

En conclusion, doit-on encore parler de transfert

Notre expérience au sein de l'ARUC-ÉS et du RQRP-ÉS nous conduit à interroger sérieusement le concept de transfert de connaissance entre théoriciens et praticiens. Dans le cadre de la coconstruction des connaissances telle que nous tentons de la pratiquer au sein de nos structures de recherche, l'idée d'une distance infranchissable entre théorie et pratique s'estompe peu à peu et le moment du transfert, tel que conçu traditionnellement, s'atténue pour faire place à une relation commune créatrice de nouvelles connaissances.

Notre expérience comme coordonnateur d'une alliance de recherche nous amène à conclure que pour améliorer le transfert de connaissance, il ne faut pas multiplier les techniques de transfert de connaissance, mais s'interroger plus en profondeur sur les mécanismes mêmes de production de connaissances.

Endnotes

1. Texte présenté dans le cadre d'une réflexion sur le travail de coordination au sein du Réseau canadien d'économie sociale, septembre 2010.

2. Sur cette question du vocabulaire, voir Ian D. Graham, Lost in Knowledge Translation : Time for a Map. *The Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Profession, 26,* pp.13-24.

3. J. Lomas (2000) *Connecting research and policy.* Isuma, printemps, p. 140-144.

4. Voir à ce sujet, ARUC-ÉS et RQRP-ÉS, La recherche partenariale : le modèle de l'ARUC-ÉS et du RQRP-ÉS, Montréal, 2007.

5. *Community-Campus partnerships for health, achieving the promise of authentic community-higher education partnerships: Community partners speak out!*

APPENDIX C

Fostering Positive Community Research Partnerships: CCEDNet Reflections

The questions in this article are designed to help community organizations as they consider participating in a research partnership. We do not provide answers; rather our goal is to assist organizations to think through the issues. This document is based on what CCEDNet and some of its members learned through reflection on the successes and challenges of the Canadian Social Economy projects (2006-11), and exploring what may contribute to building stronger partnership relations in the future.

Alignment with the Organization's Strategic Priorities:

- Does the focus of the project address current policy and practice areas that are strategically important to your organization at this time?
- What are the anticipated benefits of the partnerships? How will it strengthen the organization, its members and the broader community development movement?
- Will the organization gain a higher profile on the Canadian landscape as a result of this partnership?

Governance:

- Will a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be in place prior to the beginning of the project?
- If this is a multi-stakeholder partnership and/or there are multiple funders, are all MOU agreements and arrangements acceptable to all partners and approved before the project begins?
- How will decisions be made during the course of the project?
- How will transparency and accountability be addressed throughout the project?
- Who will have final say over budgetary matters?
- If there is a project board, how involved will they be in the management of the project? How will the composition of the board be decided?
- Are regular evaluations of the partnership and project activities included in project structures?

Considerations specific to University Partners:

- Is resource allocation controlled by a university partner? If so, can agreements be put in place at the beginning of the project to address any imbalances in access and distribution of resources?
- What role will university research ethics review play in the project; how might this enable or constrain involvement of community partners?
- What project structures are in place to care for the specific needs and requirements of community partners?
- How will contributions of community partners be acknowledged?

Relationships Building:

- What role will community partners play? Will they be involved in decision making guiding the project?
- Are there clear opportunities for relationship building at the local, regional, and/or national level?
- Are sufficient resources and supports available to facilitate partnership building and do they address geographic spread (travel, in person meetings, release time, honorariums, etc)?
- Are there sufficient supports in place that these relationships may continue beyond the life of the project – if desired?
- Are resources allocated or project activities planned that will contribute to capacity building for community organizations?
- Are there opportunities for building relationships among peers, with academics, with government partners? Others?
- Does the partnership account for regional diversity?
- How do the researchers/partners value and perceive partnerships with community organizations?
- How can potential power, resource and role imbalances be addressed?

Other:

- Will there be direct or indirect opportunities to influence policy makers?
- Will this project contribute to an increased likelihood of shared paradigms on the importance and role of the Social Economy and Community Economic Development? If not, how will this affect the partnership?
- What is the dominate approach around community-university research partnerships? Is it doing research "on" or "with" community partners? How might this affect such things as: selecting research priorities, sharing

information, general communication, and resource allocation?

- What will the direct benefits be for your organization?
- What will the project legacy be for your organization and community members?
- What is the likelihood of long-term sustainability of project outcomes?