



BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH

A social enterprise is a revenue-generating business with primarily social objectives that reinvests its surplus for the benefit of the community.

Volume 1, Number 3

December 2006

Outreach and Encouragement Needed to Support Social Enterprise

In spring 2006, through the Development Wheel project, there were 72 people participating in workshops to assess their readiness for social enterprise in BC. Thirty different organizations came out of the workshops, indicating on surveys completed at the end of the session that they were interested in taking the next steps to develop a social enterprise. This is approximately 50% of the organizations represented. About five months later, in September 2006, we talked with some of these organizations to find out what had happened in the

months since the workshop and what they needed to assist their development efforts. We undertook this work because not one of them had contacted the regional intermediaries in their areas to ask for help and we wondered why.

The workshop participants we talked with include a range of non-profit interests and populations, such as women, immigrants, inmates, low-income citizens, people who are dying, and consumers of the mental health system. They also represent farmers, artists, and others from the business community. They are staff and volunteers.

What did they tell us when we called? In most cases, the champions we spoke with were doing the work off the sides of their desks. They are challenged to dedicate time and resources to social enterprise development.

Through the lessons learned at the Development Wheel full-day session, and the workbook they took away with them (although most admitted that they had not yet had time to review the book), they know they still need to: educate and engage their boards (and perhaps members or other stakeholders) dedicate

resources, develop work plans, set criteria for enterprise selection, discuss policy, define ownership and management structures, as well as the work required for feasibility and business planning, and eventually financing and start-up.

But, at the very beginning, during what we call the early stages of development, they are adding all these tasks to their already overextended list of jobs, often within an organization where there is staff or board turnover, or other internal matters requiring attention. How can they advance social enterprise as a priority and give it the consistent, persistent attention that it needs, in this environment? Is it even realistic to suggest that very small non-profits should be pursuing social enterprise?

During those conversations, we also discovered people who are eager for someone to talk to about their social enterprise vision and challenges. They want someone to brainstorm with, to bounce ideas off. They want some help to educate their boards. They need free, early-stage coaching and supports.

[See "Encouragement" on next page]

In This Issue

Outreach and Encouragement Needed to Support Social Enterprise

Help for Start-Ups

Trillium Presents Cheque

CCO Says the Development Wheel Works!

RDÉE Holds DW Workshop in Sturgeon Falls—The First in the North

Help For Start-Ups

Some of what we discovered in our follow-up with community organizations and groups is reinforced by findings from a longitudinal study of social enterprise development or start-up in Britain.¹ The UK research found that early stage development of social enterprise requires significant encouragement and confidence-building on the part of a coach or technical assistance provider. It also states that this encouragement and support needs to be proactive and long-term. The authors describe four areas of development in which community organizations need specific expertise:

- ◆ **General micro-business skills:** such as break-even income and cost analysis
- ◆ **Marketing:** identification of new markets and development of marketing plans
- ◆ **Management and decision-making:** which is more complex given their democratic/stakeholder engagement structures
- ◆ **Government contracting:** social enterprises that take on contracts with the government often experience tension related to satisfying the service users (downstream customers) and the contractor (the upstream customer)

Typically, the community organization will need not one, but several different advisors to work with them on these development tasks, particularly if there is sectoral expertise required (for example, around agriculture or food). Ideally, the advisor(s) also take an approach that builds knowledge and skills within the organization itself. So organizations need to invest both their staff time to work with and learn from outside consultants, and their funds to pay for this expertise.

In BC, the Development Wheel project has created a space where a range of funders and technical assistance providers can discuss ways of collaborating in order to provide both higher quality and more accessible technical assistance for social enterprise. How can we develop a system of supports that is responsive, that encourages both organizational and individual learning about what works and that is sustainable? How can we use existing grant pools to leverage a broader base of investment to support early stage development tasks? How do we connect those who provide technical assistance so they can share what they learn and so we don't "re-invent the wheel?" We will be testing some approaches to this and monitoring impacts over the next year in BC. If you or your organization would like to be part of this dialogue, contact Michelle at colussi@shaw.ca. Ω

Trillium Foundation Helps Fund Development Wheel Projects in Ontario

In our last issue, we told you about the Ontario Trillium Foundation's generous grant. Here, Suzanne Bédard, Trillium's Program Director, presents Trillium's cheque for \$223,000 in support of the Development Wheel project in Francophone Ontario.

Ω



In picture, left to right: Suzanne Bédard; Ethel Côté, Ontario DW Project Coordinator; Phil McNeely, Ottawa-Orléans MP; Hon. Madeleine Meilleur, Minister in charge of Francophone Affairs; and Nicole Sauv , Director of RD E Ontario.

Register Now!

Canadian Conference on Social Enterprise

January 28 to 31, 2007 in Vancouver, BC

For more information on the conference, and its program, speakers, and schedules, please visit:

www.enterprisingnonprofits.ca

[Encouragement... continued from page 1]

In BC, where the Fraser Valley Centre for Social Enterprise is working with the Development Wheel project, follow-up has resulted in some organizations being more actively engaged and focused on their enterprise development work. To find out more about the work of the Fraser Valley Centre for Social Enterprise, go to: www.centreforsocialenterprise.com, or email Stacey at stacey.corriveau@southfraser.com

We now understand more about what these organizations need, but there are still questions about what is realistic, given what it takes to develop a social enterprise. Where should developers be focusing their time in order to achieve the greatest community benefits? Stay tuned as we continue to explore this idea over the next year.

Ω

¹ Lyon, Fergus. Ramaden, Mark. "Developing fledgling social enterprises? A study of the support required and the means of delivering it." *Social Enterprise Journal*, Vol 2, Issue 1, 2006. Social Enterprise London.

CCO Says the Development Wheel Works!

Crossroads for Francophone Cooperatives in Ontario, the Ontario Cooperative Council (the Conseil de la Coopération de l'Ontario—or CCO,) promotes co-operation and the fulfilment of the Franco-Ontarian community. In fall 2005, the CCO created a training, information, and technical support project for elected municipal officials and municipal economic development corporation agents on how to create community wealth in regions through co-operative enterprises. A first look at the Development Wheel project revealed the usefulness, relevance, and ease of adaptability of this resource for the CCO. In order to better understand its full potential, the CCO got actively involved in the project's Provincial Steering Committee and participated in numerous training sessions offered by the CCE provincial coordinator, Ethel Côté. The CCO quickly integrated the tool into its daily work, noting that it is easily applied to the co-operative model since the development of cooperative enterprises yields collective enrichment projects.

Dominique Guénette, main advisor in co-operative development, had this to say about the Development Wheel project:

It is important to be a good guide for people in order to better support collective projects, and this is where the Development Wheel fully integrates in many of our interventions.

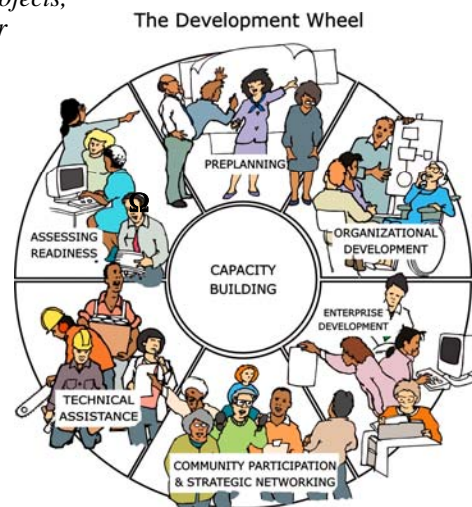
First Northern Ontario Development Wheel Project Workshop Held in Sturgeon Falls

On October 26, Sturgeon Falls was host to the first “Building Community Wealth Through Social Enterprise” workshop of the Development Wheel project. By evaluation surveys we held at the workshop, and at the Provincial Steering Committee meeting, we noticed that there were a number of reasons for its success. Some of these included the degree of promotion we did; the logistical organisation, preparation, and facilitation we put in place; the development tools presented; and the level and type of training for the RDÉE Nord team. Overall, however, success can be attributed to the strong presence and commitment of the community members who represented organisations from various sectors across the North, as well as the positive contribution from our partners in this capacity-building exercise.

After this workshop, 94% of participants expressed increased interest in the development of social enterprises. Those who initially had little interest, commented positively on a variety of possibilities for using or adapting the workshop's proposed tools and their components. Some expressed interest in the exercises for diagnosing entrepreneurial characteristics to be found in a developing social enterprise group. Others said they liked the proposed process for planning organisational development. Still others expressed strong interest in processes used to mobilise community, private, and public partners during the enterprise development stage, which they felt was necessary to ensure its success.

The participants were also unanimous in their comments on the quality of the facilitation (81% excellent and 19% very high) and on the overall usefulness of the workshop (62% excellent and 38% very high). Approximately 98% of participants are ready to use most of the practical tools proposed in this training session for the development of their social enterprise.

We use this tool in our “Jeunes ambassadeurs coopératifs” (Young co-op ambassadors) training program and in our training sessions for the member municipalities of the Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario (AFMO) (Ontario's association of Francophone municipalities). We strongly believe this tool will help us rally communities around co-operative projects, to build on their capacities so they can carry through their social economy initiatives.



Furthermore, we noticed a strong coherence between appreciation of the usefulness and quality of the information and the registration fee for the workshop, which was considered to be fair.

In January, RDÉE Ontario, in collaboration with the CCO and supported by the project coordinator, will present more workshops of this kind across the large Northern Ontario region.

Ω



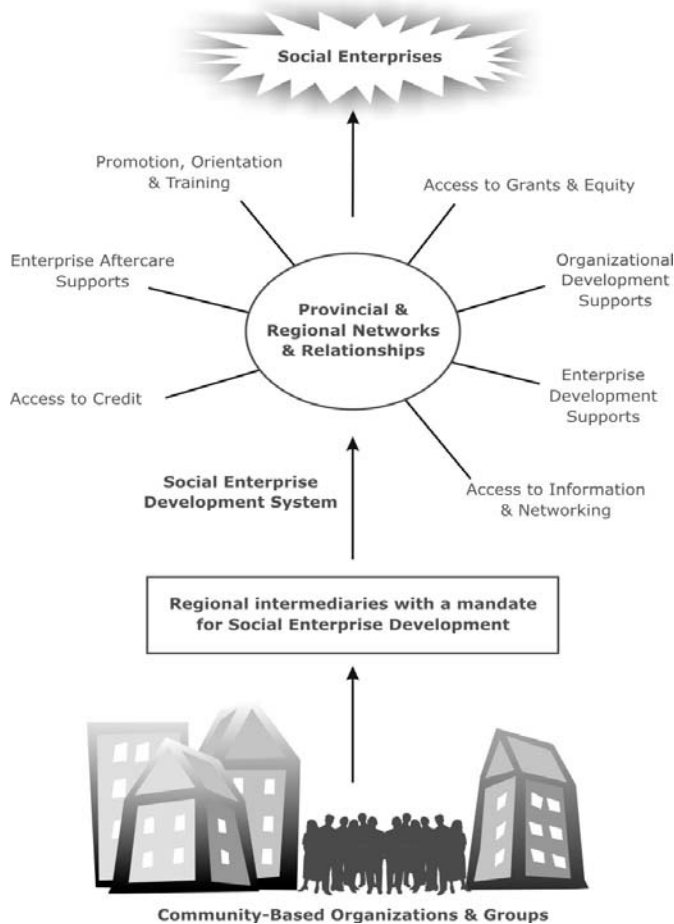
Development Wheel Workshop hosted in Sturgeon Falls on 26 October 2006.

Resources:

The 2nd edition of *Building Community Wealth: A Resource for Social Enterprise Development* is now available as a free pdf download in both French and English at: www.cedworks.com.

Also at cedworks, you can access the Social Enterprise Hotlist! with over 20 articles on training businesses, forest sector social enterprises, aboriginal applications, cooperatives, finance for social enterprise, and much more!

See you at the 2nd Canadian Conference on Social Enterprise in Vancouver, BC, January 28-31, 2007. For more information, go to: <http://www.enterprisingnonprofits.ca/conference/>



OUR PARTNERS

- ◆ BC Cooperative Association
- ◆ Enterprising Non-Profits Program
- ◆ VanCity Capital Corporation
- ◆ Coast Capital Credit Union
- ◆ Fraser Valley Centre for Social Enterprise
- ◆ Community Futures South Fraser
- ◆ Volunteer BC
- ◆ Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique
- ◆ Société de développement communautaire de Prescott-Russell
- ◆ Conseil de la Coopération de l'Ontario
- ◆ RDÉE Ontario – provincial (*inclus AFMO, CCO, UCFO, Collèges*) et Centre sud-ouest, est, et nord
- ◆ Économie solidaire de l'Ontario
- ◆ L'Union culturelle des Franco-Ontariennes
- ◆ CESOC
- ◆ Collège Boréal
- ◆ Société d'aide au développement des collectivités
- ◆ CCEDNET, Ontario Council
- ◆ FedNor, Région du nord de l'Ontario



- ◆ Fondation Trillium



- ◆ Secrétariat rural

Canadian Rural Partnership

Canada



Partenariat rural canadien

Michelle Colussi, Project Co-director, BC Project Coordinator: colussi@shaw.ca

Éthel Côté, Ontario Project Coordinator: ethelcote@bellnet.ca

Mike Lewis, Project Co-director: ccelewis@island.net

We Want to HEAR from YOU!!!

We strongly encourage you to add your reflections on impacts and learning that your participation in the project has facilitated... or not! We undertake to share the good, the bad, and the ugly with the expanding network of project participants, as well as with other readers. Communications should be sent in French or English to Mike Lewis at ccelewis@island.net.

Building Community Wealth (© 2006) is published quarterly by the Development Wheel Project, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, with the Centre for Community Enterprise.

Editing/Design: Maggie Paquet/MAIA Publishing; Graphics: Don McNair; Translations: Guylaine Leclerc; Photos: Mike Lewis, Éthel Côté

For more information, contact Michelle Colussi at: colussi@shaw.ca

For workbooks and a range of other resources, please visit our website: www.cedworks.com