

The Development Wheel Project

Baseline Report for Provincial & Regional Organizations: Social Enterprise Awareness, Capacity and Effectiveness in BC in 2005

Introduction

From the following baseline data, we hope to identify the current state of relationships, supports and services provided by members of the provincial steering group (PSG) in BC. This “current state” or snapshot is based on information collected at the end of 2005, and it reflects activities during 2005, and prior to the implementation of the project.

Understanding what the information is telling us, or as the case may be, not telling us, is important for our thinking about both the implementation of the project from this point (eg: what priorities may be) and the next stage round of data collection. It is also a way of testing the research tools, to determine if data collected is reliable and valid, etc.

Data Scope and Limitations

There are eight organizations participating in this survey. In some cases, organizations do not track information about their services, so there is no data available. This has an impact on the scope and reliability of the information. For example, the Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique (SDECB) could not answer many of the questions since they were in the process of establishing their services. They intend to support Social Enterprise (SE) among francophones across the province. The Fraser Valley Centre for Social Enterprise (FVCSE) was also just launching their organization. For the regional organizations there was also a tension between what they were mandated to provide, and what they could actually provide, which resulted in uncertainty about how to respond to some questions and a sense that services are being delivered “off the sides of a desk” when time permits. The profile of respondents in this survey is:

- 3 provincial organizations:
 - SDECB – serves francophones; has just begun to develop the services.
 - Enterprising Non-Profits (ENP) – training & grants for SE development
 - BC Coop Association (BCCA) – training, orientation, coop development support & referrals; provincial rep for CDI program
 - (Volunteer BC is now also part of the PSG but they have just joined and are not yet integrated into the baseline.)
- 2 financial institutions that service lower mainland & Victoria only but who have supported ENP and participate in the Social Economy Roundtable
 - Vancity & Coast Capital
- 2 regional organizations:
 - Nadina CFDC – business development support for several SE's over the last few years; financing (direct & referrals)
 - Fraser Valley Centre for Social Enterprise (FVCSE) – (a partnership between South Fraser CFDC & Mennonite Central Committee Employment) promotion & resources for SE; training & other TA; financing through the CFDC; referrals

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- 2 representatives from the Rural Secretariat (RS):
 - one from the BC RS Team – with a provincial view
 - one with a national view

We also need to be aware that there are a couple key provincial organizations, with a mandate for social enterprise development, that are missing from this snapshot: WED and Community Services Coop. It could also be argued that perhaps Ecotrust should be at the table. We also need to note that the two financial institutions, while they do not lend in rural areas, are significant players in their support for ENP and a variety of other initiatives related to the social economy and social enterprise in rural BC.

The BC Data

1. What are the current levels of awareness and commitment of provincial and regional level organizations about and to social enterprise development?

Participants rated the SE awareness of their boards and staff relatively high (4), and for those with a membership base only slightly lower (3). Most thought that their boards viewed SE in the way it was described for the project and that commitment levels were also high (4). All but one group indicated that they had a strategy for advancing SE. There was however a much wider spread in responses around the significance of SE to their missions, and actual SE activities. Although averages for these questions were (4), responses ranged from 2 to 5. This could be an indication of early stage attention to SE.

The boards and staff of participating organizations are aware of and committed to SE but not all have developed or are yet implementing specific activities.

2. What is the current capacity of provincial and regional level organizations in facilitating and supporting SE development?

Direct Service Provision

Training: 4 organizations provide formal training. In 2005 there were 63 total sessions offered to about 300 plus people. 2 ENP sessions (about 80 participants), 2 sessions through FVCSE (for about 190 people) and BCCA delivered 58 orientation sessions on coops across the province (participants #'s unknown). SDECB delivered 1 session to it's members on SE and this project.

Organizational Development Supports: 4 of the participating organizations offer organizational development services for SE. In 2005 there were 94 clients served. ENP provided assistance for about 25 organizations, BCCA worked with 25 groups or organizations (in terms of co-op formation activities), another 31 received support from BCCA around their Coop Development Initiative (CDI) applications, and Nadina CFDC worked with 13 SE clients.

Business Development Supports: There are 5 organizations that provide business development support. 18 clients (or potential SEs) were served in 2005. The regional

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organizations worked with 2 & 13 clients, and ENP worked with 3. *Neither of the financial institutions track this information.*

Business After-Care Supports: Only 1 regional organization provided any support in this area in 2005 (to 5 clients). *This area of SE support is a clear gap.*

Credit: Of the 2 regional and 2 provincial organizations who provide credit for SE, only 1 regional organization had delivered 3 SE loans in 2005. Neither of the credit unions could provide this information – they don't track it. The credit unions also only service the lower mainland & Victoria, so are outside of the rural focus of this project.

Grants: 2 organizations offer, or act as the agent for, grants in BC. The ENP program delivers about \$150,000 worth of grants each year in two separate application periods. In 2005 they supported 26 potential SE's. There were 5 CDI grants in BC in 2005 (through BCCA). There were 31 grants made by, or through, PSG members. This does not include several significant grants made by the Rural Secretariat or other possible sources of SE grants in BC such as Vancouver Foundation or other government sources.

The information we have suggests that the demand in 2005 was high for organizational development services compared to other types of services for SE. Given that organizational development tasks are an early stage, and ongoing task, related to SE formation, this is not surprising. ENP and BCCA seem to be active in training and development activities but we do not have information about the locations of their clients. After-care is the biggest gap in services. The Nadina CFDC was also fairly active in 2005 and it will be interesting to see if the project increases their loans or support services. The FVCSE was in start-up mode for much of 2005.

Referred Services

Many organizations do not track this information, but do say they provide referrals. The government members and BCCA make referrals for organizational development, business development and after-care services. BCCA made about 20 referrals for technical assistance in the year.

Gov reps and both regional organizations made referrals for credit (6, 3 & 1) and Gov reps and 1 regional organization made a referral for grants (6 & 1).

Referrals for grants are made most often to ENP and CDI with one organization who referred to the Cooperators CED fund. BCCA indicates that about 5 projects/year are funded through CDI each year in BC. ENP made 26 grants in 2005 for a total of about \$150,000. Referrals for credit are made to regional credit unions, WED, Ecotrust, Community Futures, and the two credit unions. *Many did not track this information and the end result of the referral (funded or not) is also not tracked by participants.*

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The referral of services for SE is not well documented by many organizations. If they do track referrals for services they often do not track the type of service or financing they are referring for and there is no follow-up to track the outcome of the referral.

3. What is the current level of client screening, or assessment of readiness for SE and how does this link to development of client agreements?

ENP, one regional org and both government reps indicated that they screen for client readiness. The regional organization does this informally, ENP uses a full day workshop and capacity checklist to pre-qualify applicants, and government does this through their application process. ENP rated their process as highly effective, and the regional organization rated their process as moderately effective.

None of the organizations use a formal client agreement to define respective roles and responsibilities around SE development.

Of the direct service providers only ENP uses a formal screening tool. It will be interesting to see if the use of the SE checklist as a screening tool increases the quality of SE proposals and/or the efficiency of the organizations. No one uses formal agreements to define client/organization responsibilities.

4. What is the current level of access to resources for SE development?

Organizational awareness of available resources was high (averaged 4 out of 5), but the availability and access to resources for technical assistance was rated much lower (averaged 2 out of 5). Availability and access to credit resources rated a bit higher (3 out of 5).

Participants rated their awareness of resources high, but availability and access lower: 2 out of 5 for technical assistance and 3 out of 5 for financing.

5. What are the current obstacles that organizations face in the process of developing effective SE services?

- Lack of human resources and the related financial resources to do the work, and then lack of access to SE development resources such as credit, grants, etc. were named as obstacles by all respondents (9);
- Resistance by the public and private sector was named (3) times;
- Poor linkages to other programs was named once.

The biggest obstacle to SE, named by all participants, is access to human and financial resources to do their work (in development) and to support SE development among community based organizations (CBO's). In particular, participants suggested access to grants and credit was the biggest challenge facing CBO's.

6. What is the current level of awareness and commitment to a SE policy context?

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At municipal and provincial levels, two of the eight respondents were “not sure”, and of the other six, ratings of awareness at these levels of government were generally low, but ranged from 2 to 5. Federally however, ratings of SE policy awareness were higher (just over 4 out of 5). The government reps, ENP, BCCA and Nadina CFDC all rated the extent of their involvement in policy at high levels and the others were moderate or low.

4 participating organizations (one of those regional) identified policy work as a priority for their organization. Ratings of awareness were high for the Federal Government and much lower for Provincial and Municipal governments.

7. What do project participants want to learn more about?

- SE impact assessment tools (4)
- best practice SE curriculum & motivating public awareness (3 each)
- prescreening, networking, SE knowledge & capacity building, SE databases, increasing human resources, increasing policy supports (1 for each)

Participants want to learn more about assessing the impacts of SE and about successful approaches to training and raising awareness about SE.

8. What is the nature of current organizational relationships related to SE?

- See the table on the next page.
- Respondents were asked to list the organizations they are working with in some way **for the purpose of SE development** – indicated with an X.
- Those who are funders only – are indicated with an F.
- Those organizations they would like to be working with, are indicated with a T – for targeted.
- The table is read across the top and down for the relationships indicated by each organization. Regional orgs are highlighted in tan.

First, there is some confusion around the “Funder” designation. Participants used it both to indicate those they fund, and those that fund them, and it is not always apparent which is which. Second, there are some gaps where one organization indicated another participant, but that participant did not indicate a relationship with the first organization. This could be an oversight, or a factor of how “relationship” is being defined. In general, given these gaps, the findings are not very reliable or conclusive.

The 2 regional organizations have quite different types of relationships. Nadina CF has a range of local relationships with credit unions, chambers, etc. and fewer relationships indicated with project participants or other provincial level organizations. The FVCSE on the other hand, indicates fewer local relationships, but they do have relationships with several other organizations that operate provincially. FVCSE also has a number of relationships specific to coop development, which is a strong area of experience and interest for them. These differences could be attributed partially to location – rural/northern versus urban adjacent – but regardless, it gives us two quite different environments to explore in terms of project impacts.

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Six organizations have relationships with WED, CCEDNet and the CFD Association of BC. Five participants are connected to the SE Roundtable and four have connections to other credit unions and to the RS. It is not all the same organizations with these connections. In spite of the questions it raises, the map will be a useful tool to initiate discussion around targeting strategic relationships (for the purpose of SE development).

	Coast Cap	Van City	ENP	BCCA	SDECB	FVCSE	Nadina	RS
Coast Cap			X		X	F		
Van City			X		T	X, F		
ENP	X, F					X, F		
BCCA					T	X, F	X	
SDECB	X, F							
FVCSE	X, F		X					X, F
Nadina								
RS/Agra Canada			X		X	F	F	
WED	X, F	X, F	X			X, F	X, F	X
Industry Canada					X	X		X
CCEDNET			X	X	X	X	X	X, F
Service Canada					F			X
DEO					F			
SE Roundtable	X		X	X		X		X
Prov. Ministry of Comm Services								X
Trail Skills Centre			X			X		X, F
Coop Dev. Initiative (CDI)				X, F		X, F		
United Community Services Coop						X		
Devco						X		
Coop Dev. Network				X				
Ecotrust		X, F						
Vancouver Found.		X, F	X					
Van City Found.	X		X	F		F		
Renewal Partners		X, F						
CFD Association	X, F	X, F		X		X	X, F	X, F
Other Credit Unions	X, F	X, F		X			X	
BC Inst. For Coop Studies				X				
Can. Coop Assoc.				X				
Cooperators Group				X, F, T				
Youth Excellence Soc				X, F				
Dev. Disab. Assoc.			X, F					
Van. CBO's			X, F					
Local CED Comm; CEDO's; Chambers	X, F					X	X	
CCE		X	X	T				X, F
Canadian Con on SE	X		X			X		
Social Ventures Inst.	X, F							