



THE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTOR AND PROGRESSIVE POLICY CHANGE IN MANITOBA

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ABOUT THIS PAPER

This is one of 2 papers prepared for the Canadian Community Economic Development (CED) Network which take a close look at the policy frameworks to support CED and the Social Economy which exist in Québec and Manitoba. The papers take a historical view of the development of such policy in these provinces and seek to identify the main factors which made this development possible. As these are the 2 Canadian provinces most advanced with respect to CED policy, it is hoped that such an analysis may provide models to inform the policy and advocacy work of the Social Economy movement in other parts of the country as well as abroad.

AUTHOR AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Table of Contents

- Introduction.....4

- 1.0 Political Context: A progressive provincial government and a partnership with the CED sector...4

- 2.0 Policy Measures: A policy framework for CED.....6

- 3.0 Policy Measures: Financing the CED sector..... 8

- 4.0 Additional Success Factors: A picture of the CED sector.....10

- Bibliography..... 20

Introduction:

Another place where the Canadian Social Economy has met with substantial policy successes is in the province of Manitoba. Indeed, Neamtan and Downing (2005) identify Manitoba's policy framework for community economic development (CED) as amongst the best in Canada¹. It is important to understand the underlying reasons for such a success and which parts were played in its achievement by a progressive political context and a vibrant and unified CED movement, respectively. What follows demonstrates the enormous role of the former, especially in the context of what continues to be a rather fragmented CED sector. But neither can we fail to give credit to Manitoba's CED sector. The policy and advocacy work of individual organizations has certainly had an impact. Moreover, a closer look at the CED sector in that province reveals an incipient organization of actors within overlapping coalitions, advocacy movements and campaigns.

1.0 POLITICAL CONTEXT: A progressive provincial government and a partnership with the CED sector

We argue that a progressive government played a vital part in the adoption of pro-CED policy in Manitoba. What is the political context out of which such a government comes?

For most of the 1990s, the CED sector, not to mention the rest of the province, labored under the neoliberal policies of Gary Filmon's Conservative Party. Under such a government, there was little support for community initiatives and the inner city was largely abandoned (Sheldrick, n.d., 1-2). The CED sector was forced to develop largely outside the State (ibid.). As a result, it remained small, poorly resourced but nonetheless dependant on the paltry funding which it was able to cobble together from a variety of government contracts (ibid.).

This situation changed remarkably in 1999 with the advent of Gary Doer's NDP Party which began to make CED a priority (Reimer, Simpson, Hajer and Loxley, 2009, 7; Sheldrick, n.d., 2). Commentators have argued that the marriage between the NDP and the CED sector was an obvious and inevitable one. Loxley and Simpson (2007) are not surprised at the espousing of a CED

¹ Actually, "one of the most comprehensive approaches to supporting CED in Canada" (Neamtan and Downing 2005, 35)

focus by a social democratic government, just like what occurred in Québec under the PQ (34). Sheldrick (n.d.) points out that the NDP has traditionally been situated on the left of the political spectrum and has evinced a “broad commitment to social and economic justice” (2), while Loxley and Simpson (2007) emphasize that the Party has long been open to collectivist, democratic solutions and to the State’s role in advancing these (35). They claim that such features have characterized Provincial NDP governments in Manitoba since 1969 (ibid.). In addition, the political platform of the NDP bears a close resemblance to the priorities which the CED sector has long militated for including the reduction of poverty and social exclusion (ibid.).

But there also seem to be many reasons to adduce that the Doer government was especially amenable to CED and that the adoption of supportive policy represent a singular occurrence, rather outside the scope of what could be expected from even NDP governments. Fernandez (2005), for example, claims that Manitoba’s contemporary political climate represents a ‘fundamental shift’ relative to what preceded it (146). Importantly, many top representatives and civil servants came from CED backgrounds. The Ministers of Finance, Family Services, Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs had been “pioneers of CED in Winnipeg” and many of their aides and advisors were hired from the community sector (Loewen, 2004, 28). In particular, two senior Cabinet Ministers elected in 1999 as well as other advisors to the Premier had been active in *Cholces*, a coalition of social groups which had resisted the policies of the conservative government throughout the 1990s (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 35). The person who was chosen to head up the Secretary to the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet, Eugene Kostyra, a former Minister of Finance, had taken part in the so-called ‘greening of Assiniboine’ movement² and had an ‘extensive’ background in CED with other organizations as well (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 35; Sheldrick, n.d., 10, 18). Finally, Reimer (2010) and Loxley and Simpson (2007) attribute the inception of many key CED policies largely to Shauna MacKinnon, another *Cholces* alumna who was selected to manage the CED file within the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet (Reimer, personal communication, April 2010; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 36; CCPA, 2010).

With such former CED activists embedded in the very nexus of power, it wasn’t long before a “strong coincidence of beliefs between government and

² Loxley and Simpson (2007) describe the ‘greening of Assiniboine.’ In the mid-1990s, some of the more militant members of the credit union staged an initiative to elect a more progressive Board of Director in order to make the organization more responsive to the needs of poor communities (22-23). Since that time, Assiniboine has become a more active supporter of CED, especially through its various community financing instruments (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 24).

CED activists” began to develop (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 3). Such people advocated for CED to the unconverted within government and their credibility and political power lent weight to their requests (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 35-36). Suddenly, those government representatives and civil servants who were less familiar with CED became willing to educate themselves about it. When Canadian CED Network developed a policy framework in consultation with community groups for example, the Province took part, thereby deepening its own knowledge of the approach (Loewen, n.d., 27). Perhaps even more importantly, CED actors began to have access to government officials and representatives. Reimer et al. (2009) speak of the relative ease of making connections with politicians and civil servants in Manitoba (31), while Loewen (n.d.) mentions CED’s “access to the halls of power” (28). In turn, the greater access of the CED sector to people in government “increased the range of interaction between government and the community sector” and created a climate of strong connections between practitioners, bureaucrats and elected officials (Loewen, n.d., 28).

2.0 POLICY MEASURES: A policy framework for CED

This favorable political climate led to the development of policies which favored Manitoba’s CED sector. In many cases, these policies were developed in consultation with the CED sector.

The NDP government first expressed its commitment to CED by creating the Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet (CEDC) for the purpose of coordinating government initiatives and developing policy relating to CED (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27; Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 35). The CEDC is an interdepartmental committee which, when first created, included the Ministries of Industry, Trade and Mines; Advanced Education and Training; Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Culture, Heritage and Tourism; Agriculture and Food; and Intergovernmental Affairs (Sheldrick, n.d., 9). The Committee was chaired by the Premier, while staff support to it was provided by the CEDC Secretariat (Sheldrick, n.d., 9-10).

The CEDC Secretariat, in turn, created an interdepartmental working group on CED whose purpose it is to contribute to each department’s learning about CED and help these to identify opportunities where CED can be integrated into their programming (Sheldrick, n.d., 10; Reimer, personal communication,

March 20, 2010). Departments are required to report annually to the working group as to advances in this respect (Kostyra, 2006, 24). As each department is asked to nominate a representative to take part in the working group, the group serves to create strong “champions” for CED throughout the government (Sheldrick, n.d., 11; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). It also acts as a “knowledge center for CED activities” (Kostyra, 2006, 24).

In 2001, the government adopted a policy framework for CED which focuses on building community capacity and skills, self-reliance and leadership and targets sustainable development through supporting the development of businesses that meet social, economic and environmental needs (Reimer et al, 2009, 7; Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 35-36). The CED Framework evolved as a result of consultations with community groups and the CED sector, and is based on the principles for Community Economic Development developed by Neechi Foods, an aboriginal workers’ co-op in Winnipeg (Reimer et al, 2009, 8; Sheldrick, n.d., 7-8; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27). Prioritizing local employment, ownership and decision-making, drawing on local knowledge and skills and reinvesting in the community constitute some of these principals (Reimer et al., 2009, 8; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27).

The government also developed another policy tool to accompany the framework in the same year (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27). The CED Lens “helps the civil service to understand and implement the government’s CED strategy” (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 28). It mandates departments to reevaluate their programming to make sure that it aligns with CED principles and to identify further opportunities to develop CED programming (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 36; Sheldrick, n.d., 11). To this end, departments are given latitude to redirect resources to CED initiatives and are permitted to apply for additional funding if these are required to carry out the modified programming (Fernandez, 2005, 152). The Lens also makes provisions for the sharing of information to ensure the coordination of programming across departments (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 37; Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 27). Finally, the Lens contains a reflexive component which allows for the identification of best practices and of barriers to further government support to CED (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 37).

Though the above measures are not problem-free and have been substantially criticized by CED practitioners and researchers³, commentators generally agree that they constitute substantial steps forward. According to MacKinnon (2006),

³ See for example Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 42-43; Fernandez, 2005, 153-155; and especially MacKinnon, 2006, 28.

the CED Framework and Lens represent the acceptance by government of the “wisdom of the CED community” (28). In adopting the principals put forth by Neechi Foods, and on which there was already broad consensus within almost the whole of the CED sector, the government position became aligned with that of the CED movement and helped create a consensus between the two as to policy and strategy (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 28, 42). Moreover, the development of the CED Framework and Lens has legitimized the principles which undergird them and led to greater awareness of CED at the community level and within municipal governments (Fernandez, 2005, 164). The CED Lens and Framework are also the first time that CED forms an important component of a provincial economic strategy (Lowen, n.d., 27). Fernandez (2005) refers to them as ‘bold’ and ‘visionary’ measures which provide “an excellent model for other provinces” (146). According to key informants, whose weighing in on the merits and shortcomings of the province’s recent policy measures Fernandez (2005) reports, these are ‘useable tools’ which mean, among other things, that CED is clearly defined (153). Finally, Fernandez herself claims that the CED Framework is “perhaps CED’s best hope of preserving support” in the Province (171).

3.0 POLICY MEASURES: Financing the CED sector

As part of the ‘wisdom of the CED sector’ which the government came to accept, came the acknowledgement of the “need for multi-year funding [and] better horizontal alignment of policies” (MacKinnon, 2006, 28). This acknowledgement was also accompanied by an understanding that development “must be owned and driven by the communities,” “not foisted upon [them] from the outside” (Fernandez, 2005, 150, 151). Accordingly, the Manitoba government has chosen to deliver its funding and support programs for CED in partnership with the sector. By injecting money into a variety of CED programs, giving long-term, stable funding to CED organizations and instituting legislation to facilitate the raising of capital by communities, the provincial government has succeeded in coordinating the deployment of its resources with the communities’ own initiatives (Fernandez, 2005, 150). Below we list some of these measures which have resulted in the creation of new opportunities and the ‘flourishing’ of the CED sector (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 37).

The Province has put over \$30 Million into more than 400 CED projects through the Neighborhoods Alive! program (Reimer et al, 2009, 9). The program targets specific urban neighborhoods in Winnipeg, Thompson, Brandon, Flin Flon, Dauphin, Selkirk, The Pas and Portage la Prairie (Neamtan

and Downing, 2005, 38; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). It promotes the revitalizations of these localities through providing support for the creation of democratically and locally administered Neighborhood Renewal Corporations (NRC) (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 38; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010), and up to \$75,000 of core funding per year for their operations (Reimer et al, 2009, 8). There are now 12 NRCs, some of which service more than one neighborhood (Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). Neighborhoods Alive! has also supported a number of other initiatives which benefit the inner city as a whole (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 38). The program has put over \$10 Million into housing in the form of \$10,000 grants (Reimer et al, 2009, 9), and has provided training for local residents, culture and recreation programs for youth (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 38; Reimer et al, 2009, 8).

The Winnipeg Partnership Agreement (WPA) is perhaps the most substantial of the government's CED programs. Over 5 years beginning in 2004, some \$74 Million was committed through a variety of programs linked to community development (Reimer et al, 2009, 9). An aboriginal development program included a focus on aboriginal employment, training and health, while a sustainable neighborhoods component poured efforts into physical renewal and building community capacity, especially of aboriginal residents and recent immigrants (Fernandez, 2005, 147). Finally, Downtown renewal concentrated on investments in health, tourism development, culture and the arts, safety and crime prevention (Fernandez, 147-148).

The government delivers core funding to some "key CED organs" (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 37). For example, in 2005-2006, the Department of Agriculture gave over \$500,000 in operating grants to 7 Rural Development Corporations (Reimer et al, 2009, 9). Commentators mention a number of specific CED organizations that have received this type of support from the province. In 1999, the Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement provided \$200,000 to SEED Winnipeg, an organization which fosters the development of businesses by low income people and delivers technical assistance and capacity building for social enterprise (Fernandez, 2005, 159; Kostyra, 2006, 23; Reimer et al, 2009, 9). The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs also gave \$250,000 to Community Ownership Solutions, an organization that supports the development of new social enterprises (Fernandez, 2005, 160). Other CED organizations to have received direct financial support from the government include the Jubilee Fund, a non-profit that provides flexible financing to community development projects and enterprises (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 73) and the North End Housing project, a non-profit organizations that helps increase the supply

of affordable housing in the North End of Winnipeg through renovation of existing properties and the construction of new units (Loewen, 2004, 28; Kostyra, 2006, 24; Reimer et al, 2009, 11; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010). Reimer (2010) also notes that the province has provided key funding to Canadian CED Network - Manitoba (described below) (Reimer, personal communication, April 2010).

There also exist programs to provide loan financing to CED organizations. The Department of Agriculture, through its Community Works Loan Program, has created revolving loan pools for micro-lending to rural businesses, CED organizations and co-ops, while the Rural Economic Development Initiatives provides loan guarantees to a similar set of beneficiaries (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 73; Reimer et al, 2009, 9). There is also the Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF). The CEDF is a Crown Corporation which provides loans mainly for mainstream businesses in Manitoba's North and in Fisheries, though some of the over \$20 Million which the entity has outstanding has benefitted CED organizations and social enterprises as well (Reimer et al., 2009, 9; Kostyra, 2006, 23; Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 73).

Instituted in 2004, the Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit is a mechanism which facilitates the raising of investment equity by community based enterprises (Reimer et al, 2009, 9)⁴. The measure provides investors in approved businesses with a non-refundable, 30% personal income tax credit to a maximum investment of \$30,000 (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 39). The credit can be carried forward 7 years and back 3 years, but investors must hold investments a minimum of 3 years or risk losing the credit (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 39; Chernoff, 2008, 56). Although the measure is intended only for for-profit businesses, something which excludes many non-profit CED organizations, a range of local businesses, including co-ops, may still access it (Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010; Loewen and Perry, 2009, 23). To be eligible, organizations must also have less than 200 staff and \$25 Million in gross assets and must apply for approval to the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (Chernoff, 2008, 55; Loewen and Perry, 2009, 23; Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 39). Those that qualify can receive a maximum of \$500k through the Credit (Chernoff, 2008, 56). Since the CED Tax Credit program began, 12 community enterprises have received a total of \$1.9 Million in this way (Loewen and Perry, 2009, 23)⁵.

4 The CED Tax Credit replaced the Grow Bonds initiative which had been created by the Filmon government (Reimer et al, 2009, 9; Loewen and Perry, 2009, 22). Under the Community Development Bonds Act, the government guaranteed the principal on bonds issued by community organizations (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, 73; Fernandez, 2005, 163; Loewen and Perry, 2009, 22). Loewen and Perry (2009) discuss some of the reasons why the government sought to move away from the Grow Bonds program (22).

5 In addition to this measure, Loxley (n.d.) mentions that the Province has also instituted measures to

4.0 ADDITIONAL SUCCESS FACTORS: A picture of the CED sector

The above narrative attributes the development of pro-CED policy in Manitoba to different fundamental causes than those which underlie the same evolution in Québec. In the case of the latter, while a progressive and responsive government was instrumental, the primary push came from a vibrant Social Economy sector which had organized and had begun to speak with one voice. To the contrary, in Manitoba, evidence points to a progressive government as the primary driving force behind policy change. Loxley and Simpson (2007) articulate this when they say that “progress in Manitoba is less a product of pressures from below than it is of a coincidence of beliefs between government and the CED community” (36), and again when they claim that the Social Economy in Manitoba has much less influence in policy-making than in Québec (4).

The reason why in Manitoba, the government is “actually ahead of the CED movement” when it comes to policy formulation (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 41) is to be found in the degree of the sector’s organization and the nature of its representation. Reimer (n.d.) relates an anecdote concerning the genesis of CEDTAS, the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance program, which, though perhaps not strictly factual, still suggests the lack of cohesion from which the CED sector suffers and the impact of this situation on the dynamic of policy development in the province. According to Reimer, after Winnipeg CED leaders had identified the lack of technical skills which CED practitioners possessed as a crucial barrier to the growth of the sector, 4 different groups advanced 4 different proposals to address the shortcoming (15). Since the province was eager to ‘fund something’ in this area, it instructed the 4 groups to reach a consensus amongst themselves: “[the government] asked the parties to go into a locked room and not come out until they had agreed...” (ibid.). Out of this was event was born the idea for a body that would identify the technical needs of an organization and help link to partner them with a volunteer that would provide pro bono service (Reimer, n.d., 15-17).

Other commentators have described the sector in similar terms. Loxley and Simpson (2007) explain how a number of sub-sectors of the CED movement, including aboriginal, francophone and rural communities, have their own

permit municipalities to reinvest property taxes into CED (2).

associations and networks, yet how none of these represent the urban, Anglophone CED movement (44). They claim that civil society in Manitoba is not even as cohesive as it was in the 1990s, when it had united in opposition to the neoliberal policies of the conservative government (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 47-48) and how these days only loose sectoral linkages remain from that time (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 48). The unity of the sector also seems to be geographically determined, with even less contact between Winnipeg's CED sector and the rest of the province than between CED sectors in Winnipeg and in Québec (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 44).

Briefly, some of the components of Manitoba's CED sector which are represented by their own bodies and organizations include the following:

- Cooperatives in the province are represented by the Manitoba Cooperative Association (MCA), a province-wide network whose members include individual co-ops; networks of regional cooperatives; bodies which represent the sub-sectors of the cooperative movement such as Credit Unions; and groups which provide specific services to the province's co-op sector such as the Cooperative Promotion Board (MCA, 2010).
- The Francophone CED movement is represented by the Conseil du développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM), a provincial body that represents and supports the Community Development Corporations which exist in each of the Province's Francophone municipalities (CDEM, 2010).
- Community Futures Manitoba (CFM) represents 16 Community Futures Organization in Northern and Rural Manitoba. Community Futures are bodies which convene community stakeholders around local economic and business development strategies (CFM, 2010; Reimer, personal communication, March 20, 2010).
- For its part, Manitoba's aboriginal movement is quite fragmented. Aboriginal representation is undertaken by numerous groups who represent a variety of sub-sectors and interests.
- The Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce (ACC) represents aboriginal business interests and engages government on issues which impact aboriginal economic and business development (ACC, 2010).
- Aboriginal youth are represented by the Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Council (MAYC), which advocates in areas of education, culture and recreation at the provincial and federal levels (MAYC, 2010).

- Manitoba's 10 Friendship Centers come together at the provincial level in the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centers (MAC), for which it is an intermediary, facilitating funding flows and reporting between the government and the individual Centers (MAC, 2010).
- Aboriginal women in Manitoba are represented primarily by the Mother of Red Nations Women's Council of Manitoba (MORN), an organization affiliated with the Native Women's Association of Canada (MORN, 2010).
- For their part, Manitoba's Métis people are represented by the Manitoba Métis Federation, an organization which dialogues with the government on policy related to a number of portfolios which affect Métis people (MMF, 2010).
- At the municipal level, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg seeks to be the policy representative for the urban aboriginal population in that city. It is led by a 10 member working Board (ACW, 2010).
- One attempt to unify the aboriginal sector at the provincial level has been the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, which seeks to unify all of the Province's 5 First Nations to present a single aboriginal voice to government on issues of common concern including treaties, gaming, health, child welfare and education (AMC, 2010).

It would seem that in Manitoba, we are a long ways away from the single unified interlocutor which represents the whole of the CED sector to government. While in Québec, there is a clear policy role for the Social Economy and clearly identified representatives, in Manitoba the role of the sector and its representatives is much less clear (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 43). Indeed, many commentators focus on the need for creating just such a representative. One of the recommendations of the CED policy agenda which Canadian CED Network Manitoba released in 2007 was the establishment of a sector advisory council that would speak to and advise government on CED on behalf of the CED sector in Manitoba. Such a body would formalize a channel through which ideas could be communicated (Reimer et al, 2009, 21). For Loxley and Simpson (2007), the building of a broad-based political alliance as exists in Québec, is precisely what is needed (4). This would be a common forum where co-ops, credit unions, aboriginal, urban, rural and francophone representatives could meet together with policymakers. (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 44).

But this is not to say that because it is more fragmented than in Québec, the CED movement has itself played no role in the adoption of pro-CED policy in

the province. To the contrary, many commentators affirm that political pressure from civil society has been instrumental. Amongst other factors, Loewen (n.d.) attributes policy support to a “strong lobby from the community” (27), and claims that a “tenacious CED sector” has “ceaselessly advocated for supportive government policies” (29). For her part, Fernandez (2005) affirms that “CED has been kept on the table thanks to the strong social movement spirit that exists in Manitoba” (173).

Much of this advocacy work has been accomplished by a number of strong individual groups and organizations, CED ‘champions’ which have emerged in recent years (Loewen, n.d., 29). Loxley (n.d.) refers to the “large number of remarkable people involved in promoting CED...[who]...slogged away in the trenches for years” (3). In the literature, commentators explicitly mention the advocacy work of certain aboriginal groups amongst the various sub-sectors of the CED movement. Sheldrick (n.d.) claims that the “large urban aboriginal population with an activist leadership inspired by concepts of self-governance and self-determination” has contributed to the emergence of a ‘CED vision’ in the province (1), while Loxley and Simpson (2007) affirm that many groups which were part of the NDP party’s base, such as Aboriginal groups, also pressured for the implementation of CED policies (36).

But there is more to this story than these individual efforts. According to Fernandez, it is as a result of the combination of the advocacy work by different groups like community-based associations, non-profit enterprises, the voluntary sector and academic research that policy work in the province has advanced (*ibid.*, my italics). And Loewen (n.d.) argues that the sector has benefited from “an intricate web of structured and unstructured relationships between a wide range of stakeholders” (29). Indeed, a closer examination of what at first glance appears to be a fragmented sector reveals an incipient organization effort which has seen many independent groups come together over specific issues in more than a few advocacy campaigns, working groups, and coalitions of various sub-sectors and concerns. As a whole, these efforts constitute a critical mass which constantly pressurizes government to develop and maintain pro-CED policy. Below are some of the most important examples of these instances:

- The No Sweat Manitoba campaign was a coalition of faith-based, community and women’s groups, labor and social justice organizations which targeted the adoption of a more ethical policy for garment and clothing procurement by the provincial government (Reimer et al., 2009, 30-31). To accomplish this, the campaign built alliances with other provincial and national groups and extensively lobbied the NDP party and civil servants (*ibid.*).

- The Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (WPRC) is a research, dialogue and advocacy body that brings together community stakeholders to assess existing approaches to poverty reduction and proposed new strategies for action (WPRC, 2008, 1-2). The WPRC seeks to fill in gaps between the activities of other groups through a forum that is 'cross-sectoral' (WPRC, 2008, 3, 8). It has participated in numerous dialogues with the municipality and was consulted in the drafting of the city's policy document *Our Winnipeg* (WPRC, 2010). It has also participated in a number of advocacy campaigns such as *Make Poverty History Manitoba* and the *Raise the Rates* campaign (WPRC, 2008, 7).
- *Make Poverty History Manitoba* (MPH Manitoba) is a multi-sectoral coalition of individuals and organizations advocating for better policy to address the problem of poverty in the province (MPH Manitoba, 2010). Its roots go back several years to consultations with community groups throughout the province (Reimer, personal communication, April 2010). Recently, The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a member of MPH Manitoba, drew on over 4 years of extensive consultation with Manitoban civil society to release *The View from Here*, a poverty-reduction plan which includes policy recommendations for improvements in the areas of housing, income security, labour market policies, education, recreation and transit among others (WPRC, 2008, 7; MPH Manitoba, 2010; Howlett n.d.). In parallel fashion, the Province of Manitoba prepared *All Aboard*, its own poverty reduction plan (Government of Manitoba, 2010). While MPH Manitoba applauds this crucial first step by the government, it criticizes the Provincial plan for lacking clear targets and timelines and for not being grounded in community consultation (MPH Manitoba, 2010; Howlett, n.d.). Instead, MPH Manitoba continues to call on the Province to adopt *The View from Here* plan (ibid.).
- The *Raise the Rates* campaign presented a petition to the Legislative Assembly with recommendations to improve the conditions of welfare recipients (WPRC, 2008, 7). A coalition of community organizations as well as other advocacy movements, *Raise the Rates* showed how Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) benefits had not increased since 1992, meaning that they had suffered a 32% depreciation in real terms as a result of inflation since that time (SPCW, 2007, 1). The campaign argued that EIA benefits were far too low to meet recipients' basic needs and that, in addition, certain of the program's regulations such as deductions in benefits for income received through employment, were not conducive to helping beneficiaries escape the cycle of poverty (SPCW, 2007, 1-2). *Raise the Rates* called on the government to raise the EIA immediately to 1992 levels, index these to inflation, as well as increase shelter rates and exemptions for earnings (ibid.).

- The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (SPCW) conducts research on issues related to poverty and advances policy recommendations. It also acts as a forum to facilitate community dialogue and as a hub for the dissemination of information (SPCW, 2010). The SPCW issues the Manitoba Child and Family Report Card, which monitors government policy in this area and has lobbied to establish a poverty committee within City Hall (ibid.). With the WPRC, the SPCW also took part in the Raise the Rates Campaign (WPRC, 2008, 7).
- The Child Care Coalition of Manitoba (CCCM) is a public education and advocacy organization which brings together parents, labor and women's groups, childcare organizations, educators, researchers and CED organizations to work towards the goal of improving the Province's child care system (CCCM, 2010). To this end, the CCCM has released a series of research reports containing policy recommendations for reforms of the sector (ibid.).
- Right to Housing is a coalition of individuals and community-based organizations that advocates for an increase in the quantity of quality social housing as part of larger poverty-reduction strategy (RTH, 2010). Responding to the current acute shortage in affordable housing caused by the lack of government investment in this area, the coalition seeks a commitment to the construction of 300 new units per year for the next five years in the province. It also calls for the rehabilitation of existing units and the institution of rent subsidies (ibid.). The mechanisms which it employs to pursue these outcomes include dialogue with civil servants and politicians, and the presentation of papers and press releases (ibid.).
- The Manitoba Food Charter (MFC) is a vision of a provincial food system in which communities have access to nutritious, affordable food which is both environmentally sustainable and culturally appropriate ("Manitoba Food Charter," n.d.). The Charter was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and is used as an engagement tool to "focus individuals and organizations on the things they can do to increase food security for themselves and their communities" (FMM, 2010). Signatories to the Charter indentify and commit to action steps which they will take towards realizing the vision presented in the Charter (ibid.). Since 1999, the group which started the Charter is a registered non-profit, now called Food Matter Manitoba to reflect the larger range of activities which it undertakes to promote local food and the food security of communities (ibid.).
- It is impossible to discuss the various movements and coalitions involved in CED advocacy and policy work in the province without mentioning the

Manitoba branch of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) (Reimer, personal communication, May 2010). CCPA Manitoba has been publishing progressive social and economic research since its inception in 1997 and has established a reputation for conducting research on relevant issues in collaboration with the community in order to present viable policy alternatives to government (*ibid.*). Recently, CCPA was the lead organization on the three-year “Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy” (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 28), which examined the problems and possibilities for integrating the CED sector in the New Economy⁶ and what the resources required for this were (CCPA, 2006, 2; Loxley, n.d., 3; “Manitoba Research Alliance,” 2005, 2). Building on this project, the organization is now also spearheading the “Manitoba Research Alliance for Transforming Inner-city and Aboriginal Communities,” a five-year initiative which seeks to identify the factors which underlie poverty and social exclusion amongst the inner-city aboriginal community in Manitoba, and to propose transformative solutions to address these (MRA-TIAC, 2010). CCPA Manitoba has also been working with partners to produce an annual State of the Inner City Report, and is in the midst of creating its second Alternative Municipal Budget for the City of Winnipeg along with partners including Canadian CED Network - Manitoba (Reimer, personal communication, May 2010). In addition to their significant contributions to policy work through research, the CCPA, by virtue of its collaborative approach, has created many important relationships amongst organizations within the CED sector (*ibid.*). They played a key role in facilitating the development of the Canadian CED Network’s Manitoba (CCEDNet Manitoba) branch, with whom they continue to share office space (*ibid.*).

To this picture of the organization of Manitoba’s CED sector must be added one final body which represents a hope for a more broad-based unification of the sector under a single representative institution (Loxley and Simpson, 2007, 44-45, 48). The Manitoba Community Economic Development Network (CED Net Manitoba) is a regional sub-node of the nation-wide Canadian Community Economic Development Network (Canadian CED Network). As an open and inclusive network of community-based organizations and civil society groups sharing a holistic and bottom-up vision of community development, and including members from a variety of geographic regions and sectors of activity, CCEDNet Manitoba already incorporates a large portion of the province’s CED sector. According to Downing (2010), the Network, under

⁶ “Manitoba Research Alliance” (2005) defines the New Economy as the knowledge-based economy made possible by the rise in education levels, greater prevalence and sophistication of information technology and an increase in ‘invisible’ trade in services and information (2-3)

the rubric of “Community Economic Development” has brought together such diverse constituents as:

Cooperatives and credit unions; aboriginal organizations; francophone organizations; immigrant, refugee and ethno-cultural organizations; urban and rural community economic development organizations; community futures development corporations; community-based non-profit organizations; civil society associations concerned with socio-economic development issues such as affordable housing, food security and poverty reduction; as well as funders such as the Winnipeg Foundation and the United Way.

(Downing, personal communication, April 2010).

CCEDNet Manitoba has gone a long way towards bringing together and strengthening the relationships which exist between this multitude of CED organizations and practitioners in the province (Loewen, 2004, 29) and has acted as a representative for these at the policy level. In 2001, CCEDNet Manitoba made recommendations which were incorporated into the government’s CED Framework (MacKinnon, 2006, 28) and more recently the Network was consulted on the use of the CED Tax credit in the province (CCEDNet Manitoba, 2008, 4). In 2007, CCEDNet Manitoba facilitated a series of consultations and interviews with Manitoba’s CED sector in order to draft a CED policy agenda (Reimer et al., 2009, 13). The Network also regularly engages the government in dialogue to advance a Social Economy policy agenda. It has met with Ministers, heads of departments and senior officials with the Province to discuss such ideas as integrating CED policy in the Sustainable Development Act, developing a workforce intermediary pilot project, and forming a CED Sector Advisory Council made up of CED leaders to identify priorities for programming and hold the departments accountable for the implementation of the CED Framework and Lens (CCEDNet Manitoba, 2008, 3-4).

Moreover, CCEDNet Manitoba has sought to create a concordance between its own policy initiatives and those of other movements and coalitions. The minutes from its 2008 Annual Member Meeting make clear that the Network’s own policy initiatives are often based on supporting multi-stakeholder campaigns. Some of the other initiatives which Network members take part in include: the Right to Housing coalition, the Raise the Rates Campaign, Anti-Poverty Legislation (now Make Poverty History Manitoba), the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, the Co-op Visioning Strategy, the Manitoba Food Charter and the Alternative Municipal Budget (CCEDNet Manitoba, 2008, 2-3; Reimer, personal communication, April 2010). CCEDNet Manitoba also

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