



Canada – Latin America Online Forum: Policy to Support the Social and Solidarity Economy

[The Canadian CED Network \(CCEDNet\)](#), supported by the [Bolivian Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies \(CEBEM\)](#) and the [International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#), is organizing a virtual on-line forum on policy to support the social economy.

The forum will bring together participants from Latin America and Canada to:

- Share social economy experiences of participants
- Discuss existing regional policy and advocacy models and their outcomes
- Identify policy supports which the social economy needs to grow in various regions of the hemisphere

This is a major opportunity for engaging in discussion and learning on the role of the social and solidarity economy in responding to local and global economic, social and environmental challenges. Government officials at all levels, NGO staff and volunteers, academics and researchers, grass roots activists, practitioners, and students are invited to participate.

Format: The 6-week forum will take place online from an electronic learning platform called Moodle. The course will consist of readings, available on the website, followed up with questions and discussions in which participants take part by writing at the time of their choosing. Participants should be able to dedicate 2 -5 hours per week to work on the forum.

Language: English speakers do not require any knowledge of Spanish to participate as all Spanish language materials and participant discussions will be translated into English by the organizers. Spanish-language participants however should be able to read in English, as the English-language materials will not be translated. In all other respects, Spanish-speakers will be able to take part in the forum in that language.

Dates: The forum will have a duration of 6 weeks, from October 26th to December 4th 2009.

Participants: We are looking for 2 types of participants:

- Participants wishing to learn from policy and advocacy experiences of key respondents by reading case studies, answering follow up questions and taking part in discussions
- Key respondents that will present short case studies on policy to support the social economy in their regions, and answer participant questions related to their experiences in the week of the forum where their experiences are presented

Prerequisites: All participants should have

- Internet access
- Ability to read in English
- Interest in learning about the policy elements needed to support the social economy
- Ability to dedicate 2-5 hours per week to course tasks

In addition to the above criteria, those participants wishing to play the role of key respondents should be willing and able to produce a short (1 – 1 ½ page) case study on their work, including policy reflections and advocacy experience, and to be available to answer participant questions and take part in discussions during their corresponding section of the forum (representing an additional 3 -5 hours for selected week). Key respondents should possess some but not necessarily all of the following characteristics:

- Research experience on the social economy
- Experiencing working on the ground in the social economy, identifying policy needs
- Advocacy or policy development experience

Deadlines: There is no limit to the number of participants for the course, but only a very limited number of key respondents will be

selected. All those wishing to participate in the forum should send an email, which includes a short description of their work, to Alexandre Charron acharron@ccednet-rcdec.ca by September 30th. Those wishing to be key respondents should indicate their interest by this time and provide a more detailed description of their work of up to 300 words. (No pre-existing project or proposal templates please).

Please note that this is a reposting of a recruitment call circulated in May 2009. We would ask that those having responded at that time please reconfirm their interest in participating during these new dates.

Forum Outline:

Week 1

Introduction: Why the Social Economy?

Consists of a discussion designed to facilitate participant sharing concerning the impacts that the social economy has achieved in their regions, and how these have contributed to social and economic policy outcomes in their settings. Also includes a methodological discussion concerning definitions of social economy activities and their values base.

Week 2

Research on the Social Economy in Canada

First part of two part presentation of results of a major international research program conducted on the social economy in Canada. Readings from a literature review will present what the research found to be the major policy supports which actors in the various regions under study found to be necessary to sustain and grow the social economy. Follow up questions and discussions will seek to identify the main themes presented in the research and to draw parallels with Latin American experiences.

Week 3

Research on the Social Economy in Canada

Second part of two part presentation of results of a major international research program conducted on the social economy in Canada. Readings from a literature review will present what the research found to be the major policy supports which actors in the various regions under study found to be necessary to sustain and grow the social economy. Follow up questions and discussions will seek to identify the

main themes presented in the research and to draw parallels with Latin American experiences.

Week 4

Experiences from Quebec and Brazil: A Comparative Study

A presentation of some experiences which are taking place in what are, with respect to the social economy, two of the most dynamic regions of Canada and Latin America respectively. Two key respondents for each region will present their experiences through the case studies prepared for the purpose of the forum. They will also be present to answer participant questions and to take part in follow up discussions that seek to identify the key similarities and differences of the two regions in what concerns the impacts of the social economy and needed policy supports.

Week 5

Experiences from Hispano-America

Consists of the presentation of four social economy policy and advocacy experiences given through readings of case studies prepared by key respondents. Through follow-up questions and discussion, respondents will examine the ways in which Hispano-America has been witness to the co-production by government and civil society of policy to support the social economy. The main thematics present in each region will be identified.

Week 6

Conclusion: Policy Supports for Social Economy

The final week will attempt a synthesis of the materials generated through readings and discussion over the preceding weeks of the course. Week 6 will attempt to identify, for each of the regions presented, the policy elements needed to support the social economy. It will also attempt to group these by common themes such as access to capital, legislation to control procurement, etc. It is through this final discussion and synthesis that the most substantial knowledge outputs of the forum are generated.

Proceedings of the discussions will contribute to a major global dialogue on the social and solidarity economy as a vehicle to address the economic, social and environmental challenges facing people and communities around the world, sponsored by the Alliance for a

Responsible, Plural and Solidarity Economy (<http://aloe.socioeco.org>).
Participants will have the option of continuing to be engaged in other opportunities for learning and policy development.

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Alexandre Charron
International Coordinator, Canadian CED Network