



Strengthening Canada's Communities / Des communautés plus fortes au Canada

IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

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INTRODUCTION

The project ran from January 2009 to March 2010. Based on the outline provided in Schedule 1, this report describes in some detail the activities, outputs, and outcomes accomplished during the project, and provides an assessment of success, obstacles, and opportunities encountered in the project. The report concludes with recommendations for further research and proposed next steps.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Immigrant Settlement and Integration through Social Enterprise* project (ISISE) was designed to make the case for Social Enterprise development as an effective model for immigrant settlement and integration.

The Immigrant & Refugee Community Action Network (ICAN), a program of the Canadian CED Network, formed six years ago as a national network of newcomer CED practitioners and their allies. The role of ICAN is to create opportunities for new immigrants and refugees to participate in the leadership of the CED and Co-operative movements in Canada and to share their skills and successful practices with other immigrants and refugees who could also benefit from these opportunities.

The ISISE initiative grew out of ICAN's work. In the 2005 discussion paper, *Creating Opportunities - Optimizing Possibilities*, the Canadian CED Network describes how the co-operative sector can assist immigrants and refugees in Canada and how immigrant and refugee communities can use the co-op model to revitalize Canadian communities. ISISE broadened this approach by including other forms of social enterprise.

The immigrant social enterprises involved in this project share the common goal of supporting the settlement and integration process for newcomers. Their main aim is to provide employment or training for immigrants and help them with practical settlement supports. In the past we have had many anecdotal stories of the benefits of immigrant social enterprise in supporting the settlement process and maximizing the assets newcomers bring with them. The ISISE initiative was designed to make this case using research and social enterprise demonstration projects, which included each enterprise writing a business plan for scaling up their work and increasing the number of newcomers they support.

SUMMARY of RESULTS

The research of this project has reaffirmed the social enterprise business model as a compelling framework through which to mobilize and enhance newcomers' skills as they ease and accelerate the settlement process. Having an array of effective community partnerships, particularly with business development and settlement organizations has been identified as the primary condition for successfully developing an immigrant social enterprise. These partnerships are the key way to overcoming the challenges immigrant social enterprises face and they need to be facilitated, supported, and nurtured.

Six demonstration immigrant social enterprises increased their internal capacity and created business plans that will guide them in scaling up their work so that they can increase the number of newcomer immigrant and refugees they work with. The Canadian CED Network is in a position to share the resources found during this project with a wide audience that would benefit from this work.

As the first phase of a larger project to conclusively demonstrate the effectiveness of social enterprise development in providing settlement and integration support for immigrants, ISISE has made significant accomplishments and provides a solid foundation from which to complete the task.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Selection of Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee was formed to provide insight and direction to the ISISE project. Advisory Committee members were drawn from stakeholder groups experienced in the challenges faced by newcomers to Canada. The committee members provided expertise from the social enterprise and co-operative sector and they came from diverse geographic locations and diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, as well as bringing diverse experiences in terms of the amount of time that they had been in Canada and the range and type of settlement experiences that they had.

The Advisory Committee held regular – generally monthly – meetings during the course of the ISISE project. They were supported by Canadian CED Network staff. The progress of the ISISE project was shared with the ICAN community through their regular teleconferences. ICAN served as a national learning network, to inform and share the learning from this initiative in order to further CED opportunities for immigrants and refugees across Canada. A list of Advisory Committee members is included as Appendix A.

2. Researching the conditions for success and effective practices of social enterprises

Before supporting specific immigrant social enterprises as demonstration projects, it was important to understand more about the conditions that make such enterprises successful. To accomplish this, the ISISE initiative conducted a survey with immigrant social enterprises across Canada. The survey also examined the supports that social enterprises provide to newcomers, together with approaches and challenges that can crop up along the way. Discovering effective practices shared by immigrant social enterprises operating across the country has provided a point of reference with which we can compare and contrast experiences in differing environments.

Similar information was also sought through a survey of organizations that support immigrant social enterprise in various ways, particularly through business development training and immigrant settlement. The ISISE survey allowed us to document the range and extent of supports provided. For the purposes of this research, both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Surveys and follow-up interviews were employed in the gathering of primary data. The process began with the development of an Outreach Strategy for engaging Immigrant social enterprises (Appendix B). A list of key informants was developed. These included immigrant-related social enterprises and social enterprise development organizations that could contribute knowledge.

The Canadian CED Network national committee structure and its network of regional coordinators assisted in this effort. Through spreading the word about the ISISE project electronically and in person, we grew the contact database of both organizational and individual practitioner informants. This contact database served as the basis for the initial web-based survey on conditions for success and effective practices. Invitations to participate in the survey were widely distributed through e-mail, newsletters, and bulletins, as well as by links posted to the websites of the Canadian CED Network and other immigrant-friendly and immigrant-led organizations. Media announcements and articles (e.g. *Making*

Waves) were also used to invite participation. The project also had a toll-free number that could be used to contact the ISISE Researcher. A Facebook site was established to take advantage of the interest in social networking sites and technologies. This allowed for multiple knowledge transfer pathways as well as for increased interactivity between the ISISE staff team and their informants and allies. Follow-up telephone calls were made to the key informants in order to elicit supplementary information.

Secondary data from reports, articles, websites, and case studies provided important data on issues related to social enterprise development that helped shape the survey, as well as provide the background context. Through analysis of the survey information from both the social enterprise organizations and the support organizations with proven track records of supporting immigrant social enterprise development, the most effective practices and conditions for successful development of immigrant social enterprises were identified.

3. Supporting six social enterprises to create business plans to launch or scale up their enterprises

To demonstrate the impact of immigrant social enterprise, six enterprises were provided support in creating a business plan that could guide them to “scale up” each of their enterprises. In addition to the benefits to be realized from the overall networking and learning opportunity, there were financial supports in the form of grants of up to \$20,000 per enterprise to develop a business plan over the four month period from November 2009 to March 2010.

In return for the support from ISISE, the participating immigrant social enterprises undertook to:

- a) Develop a viable business plan that could allow the enterprise to employ more newcomers.
- b) Develop the knowledge and skills of the enterprise around business plan development.
- c) Share the learning from the ISISE process with other immigrant social enterprises.

- **Selection of Demonstration Partners**

A Selection Committee was established from Advisory Committee members to evaluate submissions. Once in place, a Request for Proposals was issued in order to elicit applications from potential immigrant Social Enterprise partners.

Interested organizations were asked to submit an application. Applications had to meet the following basic eligibility criteria:

- Be an established immigrant social enterprise or a new enterprise ready to launch
- Be either a co-operative or non-profit community enterprise
- Have the capacity to enlarge the business to increase the number of newcomer immigrants employed
- Have completed the ISISE project on-line survey for immigrant social enterprises
- Be a member of the Canadian CED Network (or be willing to become one)
- Be willing to participate in ICAN teleconferences to share learning across the network.

A matrix was then used to assess the social enterprise based on the five criteria that incorporated the results of the research on conditions for success:

- Financial strength and business capacity
- Resources to expand in place

- Community support and partnerships
- Staff motivation involvement and support
- Settlement supports offered

The completed application form, work plan, and budget, along with their survey responses and the overall quality of the application, were all used in this assessment.

ICAN and the Canadian CED Network were committed to diversity in this granting process. A diversity matrix was developed and the highest scoring applications were applied to this matrix so that the final selection ensured a reasonable diversity of region, gender, age, ethnicity and language, as well types of enterprise (co-operative or social purpose enterprise), products or services produced, and urban and rural. The diversity matrix is included as Appendix D.

- **Creation of Business Plans**

The six Partner organizations in the pilot project were confirmed by contract, and a principal contact at each selected immigrant social enterprise was identified. Each of the participating enterprises were expected to create a viable business plan providing the details of how to scale up their business to increase the number of newcomer immigrant employees who can benefit from the work experience, language training, networking opportunities, and other settlement supports acquired as workers in the enterprise.

Whether developing a brand new business plan or updating a previous plan, it was recognized that most of the partner groups would not have the market research and other skills required to satisfactorily demonstrate the need for a new service, or to find a solution to a particular business challenge. ISISE staff therefore encouraged and facilitated the engagement of local consultants who would not only bring specific business planning expertise to the task, but who would also be expected to take on a coaching role and develop the business plan by facilitating the involvement and assistance of those running the enterprise, thus building the business planning capacity within the sector.

The ISISE staff included a community-based business consultant who was available seven days per week to all six of the partners. This consultant acted as a liaison between the partner groups and the ISISE Project Coordinator, but the main role of the consultant was to respond to any questions or concerns raised by the employees of the social enterprises or by the local consultants working with the partner groups.

Draft business plans were submitted for assessment after three months, leaving the fourth month to review the assessment and update the plan for final submission.

- **Business Plan Assessment and finalization**

In order to avoid the lack of impartial analysis that can result from a comfortable relationship between the community-based business consultant and client, ISISE built an external assessment function into the project. Based on responses to an RFP, the Canadian CED Network contracted with a team of business consultants experienced in social enterprise and worker co-ops to provide an independent assessment of the draft business plans submitted. With the ability to work in both English and French, Brunet Sherwood Consultants and Sol-Air Consultants worked together to assess each plan. They reviewed the drafts and provided each of the groups with written impartial critique of the plans that included very specific advice on how to strengthen weak areas (Output #5). After the groups had a

chance to digest the written assessment, the external reviewers met with each of the SEs and ISISE staff, either in person or via teleconference, to discuss all of the points raised in the written feedback and to provide further commentary and advice, based on each group's needs. The resulting dialogue was captured in note form and transcribed, and the external assessors then incorporated any insights into a final document that summarized all of their feedback on the Business Plans. The social enterprises then finalized their business plans and submitted them to the Network.

- **Peer Learning, Network Building & Mutual Support**

ISISE staff arranged briefing sessions with the contact people identified by each Partner organizations. A process of regular group teleconferences and written reports were used to keep abreast of developments and to capture feedback and key learnings throughout the project. In keeping with our commitment to an inclusive and participatory approach, ISISE staff organized opportunities for the various partners to communicate frequently. Highlights of these meetings were shared by staff or partners with the Advisory Committee and the broader ICAN network.

4. Additional Activities

i. Catalogue of Immigrant Social Enterprises

To better understand the landscape of this sector it was important to know which immigrant social enterprises exist in the country. No reliable or comprehensive "inventory" of immigrant social enterprises existed when the ISISE project began, so a mapping process to identify the number and type of immigrant SEs, along with their contact information, was initiated.

Throughout the project, staff and committee members worked together to create the first national catalogue of all known immigrant social enterprises. During this time the Canadian Co-operative Association began a mapping of immigrant co-operatives and the two organizations worked together to create their respective documents.

ii. Profile of Immigrant Social Enterprise

The data from the surveys designed to describe the conditions for success also provided the information needed to create an initial profile of immigrant social enterprise in Canada.

iii. Five Case Studies of Immigrant Social Enterprises

The data from the surveys along with follow-up discussions provided the information needed to create five case studies of immigrant social enterprises.

OUTPUTS

The contracted Outputs have been included as appendices of this report. These include:

1. An Outreach Strategy report.

Some details of the outreach process have been described in section 2 above. The complete strategic plan used to engage Immigrant social enterprises is included as Appendix B.

2. A Research Report on best practices for social enterprises targeting immigrants. This document, entitled ***Experiences of Immigrant and Refugee Social Enterprise in Canada - Report on the first phase research findings of the Immigrant Settlement and Integration through Social Enterprise Initiative (ISISE)***, is attached as Appendix C and downloadable from the Canadian CED Network website. http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet/files/ccednet/pdfs/rant_and_Refugee_Social_Enterprise_in_Canada.pdf

Twenty-one immigrant social enterprises and thirty-seven support organizations responded to the online surveys. To research “best” or effective practices, the enterprises and the support organizations identified conditions for enterprise success. The most important condition for success was direct support from settlement organizations and business development organizations helping with business plan development, management skills, and marketing. They also described other community organizations and individuals providing important supports, from funding to volunteer labour, and mentoring. Partnerships and networking were also cited as a key factor in overcoming the many challenges they face, and these partnerships need to be facilitated, supported, and nurtured.

Other conditions for success often cited included effective marketing with constant engagement of target customers, enhancing knowledge of CED, and building the capacity of immigrant leadership. The ability to maintain the balance between fulfilling their social goals - usually settlement and training- while striving for economic self-sufficiency was another condition for success often reported by the social enterprise support organizations.

3. Report that classifies potential partners and confirms the selection criteria. The report *Demonstration Partner Selection Process and Criteria* is included as Appendix D.
4. Business plans, including sustainability of 3 potential social enterprises. Six enterprises were supported (4 to scale up, two to launch), rather than the three new enterprises originally proposed. The rationale for this decision is described in the Assessment of Success, Obstacles and Opportunities. Business plans of the six social enterprises are attached as Appendix E.
5. Assessment of business plans. The six assessments by Brunet Sherwood Consultants and Sol-Air Consultants are included as Appendix F.

Additional Outputs:

6. Catalogue of Immigrant social enterprises across Canada

This catalogue is a living document that continues to be updated. The current database shows the name of the Social Enterprise along with Province, City, Support Organization, Product or Service, and website or email contact. It lists 117 Immigrant social enterprises across the country; 54 in Ontario, 26 in Quebec, 13 in British Columbia, 10 in Alberta, 9 in Manitoba, 2 in New Brunswick, 2 in Nova Scotia, and 1 in Saskatchewan.

The Catalogue is included as Appendix F of the Research Report and is downloadable from the Canadian CED Network website. http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet/files/ccednet/pdfs/Immigrant_SE_Catalogue.pdf

7. A profile of Immigrant social enterprises in Canada

Based on the two surveys, a profile of the immigrant social enterprise movement emerges. About 75% of the social enterprises surveyed were established and run by immigrants. On average, they originated 5 years ago and they work with anywhere from 5 to 200 immigrants annually. Their products or services include crafts, catering, cleaning, and translation to name a few, and most enterprises have increased their business income since their first year of operation. The majority are situated in urban areas.

All of the social enterprises reported a range of settlement supports they provide, either formally or informally. All provide Canadian work experience and most provide Canadian cultural and life skills, language training, education, and training in business management. Most enterprises also help with networking skills, access to local resources, and social supports as well as job-specific skill training. A few provide housing supports.

This profile is included in the Phase 1 report attached as Appendix C.

8. Case Studies of five immigrant social enterprises

Relating concepts such as challenges and conditions for success to concrete examples helps to connect readers to the research results. The five case studies tell the stories of five immigrant social enterprises -EthniCity Catering in Calgary, the Immigrant Integration Farming Worker Co-op (IIFC), ANAK Filipina & Books and SewFair in Winnipeg, and EcoEquitable in Ottawa.

The Case Studies are Included as an appendix of the Phase 1 report attached to this report as Appendix C and available on the Canadian CED Network website. http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet/files/ccednet/pdfs/ISISE_Immigrant_SE_Case_Studies.pdf

OUTCOMES

As described in the Agreement, the Outcomes for the project were:

- *CCEDNet identifies potential partners that agree to participate with it in establishing three social enterprises.*

- *CCEDNet and its partners identify three potential social enterprises and develop business plans for them*

Identified and Selected Demonstration Partners

The support organizations and social enterprises identified and selected as demonstration partners were:

Social Enterprise	City	Province	Business Advisor / Mentor /Support Org
International Women's Catering Co-op	Victoria	British Columbia	Greater Victoria Intercultural Association
Ethnicity Catering	Calgary	Alberta	Centre for Newcomers (Advisory Committee)
ANAK / ANAK Publishing Worker Co-op	Winnipeg	Manitoba	SEED Winnipeg, CEDTAS, Canadian Worker Co-op Federation (CWCF)
Enviro-Safe Cleaning Worker Co-op Ltd	Winnipeg	Manitoba	SEED Winnipeg, Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Service (CEDTAS)
Facilitating Inclusion Co-op	Hamilton	Ontario	Immigrant Women's Centre, Sky Dragon Community Co-op
Coopérative de Travail Maintenance 1 A plus	Gatineau	Quebec	Réseau DÉC d'Ottawa, Centre multiculturel, récréatif et éducatif d'Ottawa

These were selected based on the process described in Output #3 and the Activities section. As mentioned above, the number of enterprises supported doubled to six, of which two were new enterprises and four were already established.

- **Geographic distribution of participating enterprises**

As shown in the Catalogue, immigrant social enterprises are not equally distributed across the country. Although they tend to be more prevalent in areas of high immigration, the highest incidence of immigrant social enterprise occurs in jurisdictions that place a high priority on including immigrant social enterprise as part of their range of policy solutions to settlement and integration. It is no coincidence that two of the partner organizations for the pilot phase were based in Winnipeg, as **SEED Winnipeg** is the most focused and experienced immigrant-serving CED organization outside of Québec. The other four organizations chosen for the pilot had also benefited from supportive policy environments in which experienced CED practitioners and co-op developers had been available as resource people to assist with aspects of the enterprises' establishment.

Created Business Plans for six immigrant social enterprises

The initial research highlighted the importance of partnerships with business developers, and so it was clear that involving them in the business plan development was also important. However, experienced business planners and enterprise development coaches are not always easy to find. Securing consultants who were also familiar with co-operatives and social enterprises was especially challenging, and the timelines were very tight. Project staff facilitated each of the partner groups in developing their own Request for Proposals. Bringing together volunteers to participate in the hiring process was harder for some groups than for others, but it is safe to say that all of the partners experienced some difficulty in engaging suitable consultants who had all the necessary skill levels.

Eventually, all of the groups secured a consultant and all enterprises were very positive about their consultant choices as they began to craft their business plans. The **leads** and consultants for each of the social enterprises were:

- **Nelson Ovale** – Advisor to Worker Co-op Maintenance 1A+ (1A+ for short)
Daniel Rotman – Coop Interface – consultant to 1A+
- **Ashley Dryburgh** – Facilitating Inclusion Co-operative (FIC for short)
Audie McCarthy – The Marrek Group – consultant to FIC
- **Musaghi Kizikilwa** – Enviro-Safe Worker Co-operative
Peter Reimer – consultant to Enviro-Safe
- **Daisydee Bautista** – ANAK & ANAK Publishing Worker Co-operative
Terri Proulx – SEED Winnipeg - consultant to ANAK and Enviro-Safe
- **Linh Bui** – Coordinator for EthniCity Cleaning
Gerrad Oishi – consultant to EthniCity
- **Lee Fuge** – Coordinator for International Women’s Catering Co-op (IWCC for short)
Romana Frey – business plan facilitator for IWCC

- **Business Plan Assessment and finalization**

Brunet Sherwood Consultants and Sol-Air Consultants written assessments of the business plans revealed strengths as well as areas in need of improvement in each plan. The need for additional financial information, particularly predicting income and expenses over a 36 month period, was the most common weakness in the original drafts.

The partners had nothing but praise for the External Assessment process, noting that it added even more value to what was already a rich learning experience. Everybody acknowledged the importance of receiving impartial feedback and constructive advice, and it was clear that the assessors brought a fresh and unbiased perspective to their reading of the plans.

The result of the overall process is that four of the six enterprises were assessed as having “a sound business model and a good business plan” that are investment ready. One was seen as having “good potential” with many strengths, but incomplete because it needed considerably more financial information. The last was assessed as being a good preliminary draft that needed more work. In both of the latter cases too much of the time and resources had gone into building HR and management capacity rather than into the production of an effective plan. The two that still need additional work are the Winnipeg based enterprises ANAK Publishing and EnviroSafe.

ANAK was the only enterprise starting completely from scratch and during the course of the ISISE initiative these young Pilipino entrepreneurs faced two major challenges. Firstly, one of the key members of the enterprise, who was the main leader and project contact person, had to withdraw from the project because she obtained employment that put her in a conflict of interest with the work of ANAK. The group also ended up trying to develop plans for two businesses simultaneously, one a publishing business and the other for book retailing. This resulted in both plans needing considerable work to bring them to the desired level. The assessment of the business plan described a number of strengths including: being a subsidiary of an existing organization, having an existing network of academic institutions and community organizations, and no direct competition.

EnviroSafe, the other business with a plan needing additional work, is actually in a very good place to scale up because they have the promise of a government contract that will require additional employees

in the near future. Their problem was that, because of this, their priority was to focus on capacity building around HR management and systems rather than giving the attention required for the business planning process. Their plan was recognized as having additional strengths including being an existing incorporated coop, having experienced owner-workers, having an “environmental” market niche with low overhead costs, and employees that speak both English and French.

The full written assessments constitute Outcome #5 and are included as Appendix F.

ASSESSMENT OF SUCCESS, OBSTACLES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Canadian CED Network, the ICAN network and the immigrant social enterprises that participated as demonstration projects all consider this initiative to have been a resounding success. It produced several significant outputs, including the five of those that were contracted as well as three additional outputs, and it exceeded the contracted outcomes.

This is not to say that challenges were not encountered along the way. There were a variety of obstacles, and many lessons were learned and shared throughout the project. In most cases, it was encountering these obstacles that created the opportunity for learning, and this was important both for the Immigrant social enterprises and the ICAN Network.

As projects develop and more research and consultation are done, it is often the case that the specifics of exactly how objectives are met needs to change. ISISE was no exception. In the course of implementing the project there have been two substantive changes in how to accomplish the objectives. These changes were based both on the research that was the focus of the first phase and on feedback from the Advisory Committee.

Amendments to the Outputs:

The first change was in the number of enterprises supported to create business plans. Although our agreement was based on supporting three enterprises, when it came to the selection process it made more sense use the same budget to support six at this stage.

Several factors went into making this decision. The business plan development process was designed to build capacity and to provide training in business planning, language skills and networking opportunities for those immigrants involved. As we looked at the relatively short time period we had to do this, particularly since the research phase was taking longer than anticipated, it was judged that the original amount budgeted for each enterprise was too high.

A lot of enterprises were eager and ready to work with us. If these resources can be used to benefit more immigrant social enterprises, this is a distinct positive that provided an opportunity to add value to the project. It resulted in more enterprises having a business plan in hand that can be used to approach potential investors, a major asset for any enterprise. It also resulted in a wider selection of enterprises being ready to scale up to help demonstrate the value of social enterprise in immigrant settlement.

The second change related to the initial expectation that this project would only focus on developing new social enterprises as demonstration projects. In the end we supported one that was brand new, one that had gone through a year or two of planning but had not yet launched, and four that were in business and wanting to expand.

Based on the early project research on effective practice, supporting the scaling up of social enterprises already in business more than starting new projects from scratch was seen by the Advisory Committee as a more effective way to meet the project goals while being more sensitive to the issues facing immigrants involved in social enterprise. Effective social enterprises usually begin small and they take several years to become established. Once they are well established, they can then scale up to work with and employ increased numbers of immigrants. This factor increased in significance because the original proposal, designed as a 3 year project, had been renegotiated to a 15 month time frame. In addition, within the social enterprise field generally, it has long been known that barriers to obtaining financing and resources to scale up a business are often more of a challenge than obtaining resources to start a business, so this approach also becomes a way to potentially overcome that challenge.

Obstacles and Opportunities during Activities

- **Catalogue of Immigrant Social Enterprises**

The process of developing a catalogue of immigrant social enterprise presented a number of obstacles.

Taking information from the respondents to the survey and a variety of web resources, finding the first 40% of such groups was relatively easy, as they were usually well-established enterprises that had joined networks or sector organizations. The main challenge was to determine if some groups were no longer active and should be removed from our list. The next 40% of groups proved much more challenging, as they often lacked websites, did not self-identify as immigrant-run, or were operating outside the various sectoral “tents” that maintained membership lists and contact databases. The final 20% of groups required significant sleuthing to discover, thanks to a variety of factors ranging from lack of staff to changes in location or unwillingness to respond to inquiries (sometimes because of language difficulties). Even at the end of the research process, it was clear that we had not found every last one of the immigrant SEs in Canada. It was also clear that immigrant SEs wax and wane in ways that make them impossible to inventory with total accuracy. The sector presents a “moving target” and any contact database of these organizations can only be completely correct and current for – at the most – a month at a time.

The importance of networks and organizations being willing to share research information was highlighted by the cooperation between our staff and those of the Canadian Co-operative Association who were mapping immigrant co-operatives at the same time. The openness of the two organizations to share information benefited both organizations. Our researchers did not find the same level of openness with all organizations they approached.

Because the process of cataloguing immigrant social enterprises continued almost up until the end of the project, the initial survey did not reach 100% of the intended target group. It was possible to identify themes and extrapolate trends when reviewing responses to the survey, but we cannot claim to have sampled the entire sector. However, the first catalogue of immigrant social enterprises that resulted from the ISISE project is far more comprehensive than anything that existed previously and its existence is a significant accomplishment.

Being able to provide a more detailed mapping of all immigrant social enterprises is one of the goals for the next stage of this work. The importance of having such an Immigrant Social Enterprise Catalogue is two-fold. This information is very important for networks and constellations to keep in touch with immigrant social enterprises as they develop their enterprises and want to share this information with their members, but it also serves as a method for immigrant social enterprises to share information, stories, and resources amongst themselves.

- **Researching the conditions for success and effective practices of social enterprises**

It was more difficult than expected to obtain participation from social enterprises to complete the survey. Results showed that a higher survey response was received from immigrant social enterprises support organizations than from immigrant social enterprises themselves. Although important information was still obtained from support organizations on their activities, it was hoped that a higher rate of response would be experienced from enterprises.

After discussions with newcomer organizations, three probable causes emerged. Firstly, most of the immigrant entrepreneurs working to develop social enterprises are so focused on their businesses that participation in a survey is seen as a “distraction”. Secondly, although the survey’s introduction emphasized the potential for future funding assistance, as well as the possibility of their being featured in the survey report as an opportunity for both marketing and networking, it appears that many enterprises did not see the benefit of this marketing. The third possible reason is that enterprises did not want information about their business collected by an organization that was funded by and, perhaps, seen as being connected with the government of Canada. This form of data collection is not a routine activity in many home nations where there is often a level of distrust of the government. Such activities “back home” could result in repercussions such as higher taxation and increased surveillance. This kind of uncertainty can affect other areas as well. Some enterprises (and individuals) might not seek to benefit from government programs and funding that might otherwise be available to them. Accordingly, this issue of trust should be highlighted for newcomers so that understanding about the role and responsibility of the various levels of government and the benefit of government-funded programs can be shared. In addition, there is the need to educate newcomers both about the benefits of having comparable data and information and about how this is normally collected. It is also important to underline the need to market their businesses to the widest possible audience and to emphasize the advantages of networking and resource-sharing.

- **Demonstration Projects**

The following obstacles were encountered during the development of the six demonstration projects:

- Securing consultants who were also familiar with co-operatives and social enterprises was especially challenging.

This difficulty is outlined in the Outcomes section above. It highlighted the value of our effective networking and also provided a learning for the Canadian CED Network, as well as the co-operative and social enterprise sectors in terms of the need to develop an inventory of co-op and social enterprise developers who have the skills and sensibility needed to work with immigrant entrepreneurs.

- Results in developing a business plan can vary considerably, even with a consistent process.

Given that each of the social enterprises had access to identical financial resources and to very similar pools of expertise, it was surprising that results could vary so widely. Some of the Business Plans were very convincing and almost investor-ready, while at least one raised almost as many questions as it answered. Based on this finding, the value of external reviewer for assessing business plans was strongly corroborated. Any tendency to over-estimate revenues and under-estimate cost, or to skirt and fudge difficult issues, was noticed and was pointed out in a kind and courteous, yet irrefutable manner. All of the plans improved significantly after they were revised in the light of the assessor’s comments.

- Official language capacity is almost always a factor.

All of the social enterprises had to deal with language comprehension and communication issues from basic challenges of deciphering heavily accented English or French on telephone calls, to the need for translation of materials. Consultants had to be patient and supportive as they adapted their customary pace to the slower and clearer communications techniques that are required in a multi-lingual working group. This challenge highlights the importance of ensuring that official language learning is integrated into the process of enterprise development.

- Social Enterprises are distinctly different from private enterprises.

Standard business plan templates often fail to properly showcase the virtues and values of a social enterprise. The business planning process not only built capacity to think in a more “business-like” manner, but also built capacity in terms of articulating social goals in business-like language. Balancing the demands of the business and social goals was always difficult, but the business planning process was important in building the capacity on the business side of that balance.

- There is a real need for networking among social enterprises

Even enterprises that operate in the same geographic area often have little knowledge of each other and seldom make time to share their experiences. However, the time spent communicating under the auspices of ISISE has provided a rich source of information and a strong sense of common concerns.

- Balancing business planning with HR and management capacity

This is another balancing act that continues to challenge most of the enterprises. As described in the Outcomes section on the Business Plans, for some it was resulted in their business plans not being as complete as would be required to solicit further investment.

Success and Conclusions

The research of this project has reaffirmed the social enterprise business model as a compelling framework through which to mobilize and enhance newcomers’ skills. Immigrant social enterprises offer many advantages. They build on the skills immigrants and refugees already have, recognize their challenges, share knowledge, tools, and resources, and provide needed supports. Social enterprises provide a mechanism for building upon individual business experience as well as increasing self-confidence, self-reliance, and group support.

Being involved in the development of a social enterprise also helps ease and accelerate the settlement process. As an immigrant social enterprise expands, it provides additional settlement supports and smoothes the path for additional newcomers, providing them with employment, Canadian work references, and a network of people like themselves who are ready to share resources and help them navigate services that support the settlement process.

Having an array of effective community partnerships, particularly with business development and settlement organizations, is the primary condition for successfully developing an immigrant social enterprise. These partnerships are the key way to overcoming the challenges immigrant social enterprises face and they need to be facilitated, supported, and nurtured.

The six demonstration immigrant social enterprises increased their internal capacity and created business plans that will guide them in scaling up their work so that they can increase the number of newcomer immigrant and refugees they work with. Most have finalized plans that were independently assessed showing them to be solid businesses ready to expand.

As a national network that acts as an information broker and a liaison between members and other organizations, the Canadian CED Network is in a position to share the resources found during this project with a wide audience that would benefit from this work.

ISISE is the first phase of a larger 3 year project to conclusively demonstrate the effectiveness of social enterprise development as a vehicle for providing settlement and integration support for immigrants. As such it has made significant accomplishments and provides a solid foundation from which to complete the task.

NEXT STEPS

Using this experience with the demonstration enterprises, the research information described in this report, and the expertise of the ISISE Steering Committee, the following next steps are proposed:

1. Support the implementation of the business plans developed by demonstration immigrant social enterprises through the provision of funding and business consultation.
2. Document the success of the demonstration enterprises in providing settlement supports.
3. Conduct further research to convert the catalogue into a more comprehensive mapping of immigrant social enterprise.
4. Develop an information and education plan about immigrant social enterprise to reach settlement organizations, immigrant associations, social enterprise and co-operative developers, business organizations and governments.
5. Design a coordinated national blueprint to support the development of more immigrant social enterprises.

Implementation of these steps will accomplish three things. It will ensure that there is a solid case for immigrant social enterprise as an effective means of settlement and integration. It will ensure that the appropriate information is widely shared and understood by those who need to be involved in this development. Finally it will ensure that these same groups, particularly potential funders, have the necessary information and a template of procedures and guidelines that would facilitate their support of immigrant social enterprise development.

APPENDICES**Appendix A : ICAN's ISISE Advisory Committee Members**

Name	Organization
Rispah Kiptoo-Tremblay	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Iffat Zehra	Community Economic Development for Immigrant Women
Trevor David	AfriCana Village & Museum
Angela Ventura	CanElsa
Patrick Mutumbi	Enviro-Safe
Terri Proulx	SEED Winnipeg
Lynne Markell	Canadian Co-operative Association

We would particularly like to recognize Lynne Markell's considerable contribution to the final shaping of the Research Report.

Appendix B: Outreach Strategy

Immigrant Settlement and Integration through Social Enterprise (ISISE).

Outreach Strategy

CONTEXT: *The ISISE initiative will catalogue and develop profiles of immigrant social enterprises across Canada as well as development organizations that immigrant social enterprise. It will also identify conditions for success and effective practices of organizations with proven track records of implementing social enterprises that support immigrant settlement. Finally, ISISE will prepare three demonstration projects to scale up their enterprises in order to increase work experience, language training, networking opportunities and the number of immigrants that these projects work with.*

Objective of the Outreach Strategy:

The strategy will identify key informants, immigrant-related Social Enterprises and Social Enterprise development organizations that will contribute knowledge.

Methods:

The ISISE researcher will use both virtual and personal communication pathways to contact the informants. The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) already has contact information for many organizations; as well, our national committee structure and our network of regional coordinators allows for consultation and contact with existing members. Through spreading the word about the ISISE project electronically and in person, we will grow the contact database of both organizational and individual practitioner informants. This contact database will serve as the basis for the initial web-based survey on conditions for success and effective practices. Invitations to participate in the survey will be widely distributed through e-mail, newsletters and bulletins, as well as by links posted to the websites of CCEDNet and other immigrant-friendly and immigrant-led organizations. There will be media announcements and articles (e.g. **Making Waves**). Further, we will collaborate with the **Social Economy Hub and the regional research Nodes** as well as through the **Canadian Co-operative Association** to promote participation in the survey via their communication media. The project will also have a toll-free number that can be used to leave comments on a “24/7” basis.

In keeping with the increased uptake of social networking sites and technologies, we will explore the use of ISISE accounts and groups on a variety of sites, including **Facebook, and Blogspot**. This will allow for multiple knowledge transfer pathways as well as for increased interactivity between the ISISE staff team and their informants and allies.*

Follow-up telephone calls will also be made to the key informants in order to elicit supplementary information.

Experience has shown that response rates and catchment efficiencies are enhanced by personal contact. We will therefore create an information flyer and poster for use at conferences and face-to-face meetings throughout the first nine months of the project. Some of the opportunities for a presentation/booth/table identified to date include:

- Social Forum (May 19-22, Calgary);
- Co-op Atlantic AGM (May 29-30, Moncton);
- Atlantic Summer Institute (June 3-5, Charlottetown);

- CCEDNet national conference (June 3-5, Winnipeg);
- Canadian Environmental Network annual conference (June 12-14, Edmonton);
- Canadian Co-operative Association 100th Anniversary (June 15-19, Ottawa);
- Social Economy Economics conference (June 9-11, Halifax)
- Co-operators “Youth & Sustainability” conference (September 24-27, Guelph);
- Quebec, Northern & Atlantic Social Enterprise Colloquium (Sept. 30 – October 2, Halifax).

There will be many other events that can be accessed on an opportunistic basis over the coming months if resources permit.

Information Sources:

The ISISE project will contact umbrella apex agencies for organizations that have already accumulated data on Social Enterprises and that can supply information on social enterprise activity in their sectors. These will include the national networks for:

Settlement Agencies; Newcomer Associations; CED organizations; the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM); the Canadian Co-operative Association; le Conseil canadien de la coopération; RDÉE and CBDC hubs.

We will access the work of sectoral and regional organizations that have already undertaken mapping of Social Enterprises. These will include:

The Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation; the Social Economy Research Nodes; Social Purchasing Portals in Winnipeg, Vancouver and Edmonton; le Chantier de l'économie sociale (and the *portail de l'économie sociale* in Québec); Co-operative Councils in each Province, both English and French (e.g. the Co-operative Enterprise Council of New Brunswick and CDR-Acadie). Some jurisdictions and sectors have completed mapping processes and published the results to their websites and/or in book format (e.g. Newfoundland & Labrador organizations documented by the Community Services Council and at www.voluntarygateway.ca).

There will be both cascading effects and ripple effects as more groups and individuals are informed about the ISISE process, so it is important to have clear deadlines for information gathering, as well as straightforward methods for incorporating “late-breaking” information into the research results without disrupting the overall process. Given that the primary researcher is located in Halifax, NS, it is appropriate for the contact with Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) and Le Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE) to use the Nova Scotian CBDCs and RDÉE as a sounding board on the social enterprise work of their colleagues in other regions.

Some organizations (such as **SEED Winnipeg in Manitoba**, and the **Mennonite Centres in Alberta**) take an active role in social enterprise development. There are also centres of research excellence that are more participatory and activist in nature (such as **l'Université de Sherbrooke**), while certain institutions fund programs for social enterprise development (such as **VanCity Credit Union**). The researcher will target these organizations to determine the contact information for what they consider as their main “success stories”.

CCEDNet's “**Immigrant and refugee Community Action Network**” (**ICAN**) will play a key role in identifying informants (many of whom are already ICAN members) in different regions of the country and in communities of differing sizes. ICAN will also furnish the Advisory Committee that will oversee the ISISE project and that will conduct the “alpha testing” on the web-based survey. The ICAN

membership as a whole will conduct the “beta testing” prior to the more widespread dissemination of the survey invitation.

The survey is to be designed with input from Social Economy researchers, Social Enterprise developers, and ICAN members. To be effective, it will need to be concise and should allow for both narrative and point form answers. The telephone and in-person follow-up for key informants will supplement the basic survey data to “drill down” deeper into conditions for success and to create the short list of SEs for Phase Two (October 2009 to March 2010) of the ISISE project.

PHASE ONE Timeline (fiscal 2009-2010).

April.

- Confirm Outreach Strategy
- Survey development and alpha testing.
- Selection of Advisory Committee.
- Creation of communications & display materials.
- Contact with national apex organizations and Universities.

May.

- Survey beta testing & launch.
- Advisory Committee teleconference.
- Review and collation of existing mapping data.
- Propagation of awareness via social networking sites.
- Placement of survey invitations and project communications.
- Presentations at conferences, workshops and colloquia as resources permit.

June.

- Survey promotion.
- Workshop/Advisory Committee organization at CCEDNet conference.
- Supplementary data gathering with sectoral and regional organizations.
- Presentations at conferences, workshops and colloquia as resources permit.

July & August.

- Survey promotion and pestering.
- Advisory Committee teleconference.
- Interviews with key informant individuals.
- Preparation for 3-Node Social Enterprise Colloquium interviews.
- Review of preliminary responses and social enterprise “long list” preparation.

September.

- Survey analysis.
- Advisory Committee teleconference.
- Completion of key informant interviews.
- Presentation at the 3-Node Social Enterprise Colloquium.
- Short-listing recommendations for the social enterprise pilot support.

NOTES: * ACSIS Community Outreach Lab’s “LAB+ Manual” (Using Social Media to Disseminate Research Activities).

Appendix C: Research Report (separate attachment) - *Report on the first phase research findings of the Immigrant Settlement and Integration through Social Enterprise Initiative (ISISE). A Research Report on best practices for social enterprises targeting immigrants titled 'Experiences of Immigrant and Refugee Social Enterprise in Canada'.*

This document is also downloadable from the Canadian CED Network website. http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet/files/ccednet/pdfs/rant_and_Refugee_Social_Enterprise_in_Canada.pdf

Appendix D: Demonstration Partner Selection Process and Criteria

Methodology

The Request for Proposals was distributed to Immigrant social enterprises and organizations that support immigrant social enterprises as described in the ISISE Outreach Strategy. After applications were received three different sets of criteria were used to assess the applications and to make the final selection.

Basic Eligibility Criteria:

Applications were received and reviewed by staff to ensure that they met the basic eligibility requirements.

To apply for the ISISE Business Plan grant, enterprises needed to:

- be an established immigrant social enterprise or a new enterprise ready to launch
- be either a co-operative or non-profit community enterprise
- have the capacity to enlarge your business to increase the number of newcomer immigrants employed
- have completed the ISISE project on-line survey for immigrant social enterprises
- be a member of the Canadian CED Network (or be willing to become one)
- be willing to participate in ICAN teleconferences to share learning across the network

Strength of Social Enterprise Criteria

A Selection Committee was established to further evaluate submissions and assess them on the strength of their application, the work plan, the budget, as well as an assessment of their strength as an immigrant social enterprise.

This assessment was based on the following criteria:

- Financial Strength & Business Capacity
- Resources to Expand in Place
- Community Support & Partnerships
- Staff Motivation Involvement and Support
- Settlement Supports Offered

The following matrix was used to make this assessment:

ISISE Selection Matrix – The Capacity of the Social Enterprise to Develop

Criteria are assessed based on the application and confirmed by reference letters and contacts for finalists

Organization	Financial Strength (Score: 1-5)	Resources in Place to Expand (Score: 1-5)	Community Support & Partnerships (Score: 1-5)	Staff Capacity and Involvement and Support (Score: 1-5)	Settlement Supports Offered (Score:1-5)	Total Score (max 25)
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Scoring Parameters

Areas of Interest	Financial Strength:	Resources in Place to Expand:	Solid Community Support & Partnerships	Staff Motivation and Participatory Involvement and Support	Settlement Benefits Offered (formal and informal & strength of each – these could be provided by a committed partner org; we don't necessarily expect the social enterprise itself to provide everything, especially formally.):
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Revenue increasing or stable? Wages for staff are sustainable? (income per staff) • Business plan completed • Marketing plan • Consistent customer engagement • Quality of the service/product • Strength of market niche • Use of business language in proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of staff • Number of volunteers • Business advisors or mentors; (eg co-op developer) • Strength of the Board of Governors (skills and background of the Board) • Business location (rent, own - space conducive for their business) • Develop immigrant leadership and knowledge of community -training, skills development, language and business language, networking supports provided to staff • Infrastructure to expand (physical, management, staff , market) • # of new positions expected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving and sharing, resources, tools, effective practices with partners and the community • Relationship with support organization in place if needed • Creating and maintaining partnerships (assess partners' contributions) • Funder support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing expectations and parameters and ensuring everyone is on the same page re activities, goals, growth, income, methods • Strength of staff morale • Are workers in the enterprise are involved in the governance and decision-making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Skills acquired • Prospects for future employment • Business skills • Networking opportunities • Language training • Housing supports • Education/training supports • Canadian Culture/Life Skills Supports • Accessing Resources Supports • Assistance Acquiring • Range of languages spoken by staff (with which to assist a wider range of clients)

Points - Scoring System:

- 5 – Very Strong: significant indication of resilience in all components
- 4 – Strong: significant indication of resilience in most components
- 3 – Average: indication of resilience in some areas
- 2 – Needs significant improvement in most areas
- 1 – Needs significant improvement in all areas

Diversity Criteria

ICAN and the Canadian CED Network were committed to diversity in this granting process. The final selection was based on the highest scoring applications that met the diversity criteria. Our commitment was that the final selection should reflect diversity in terms of region, gender, age, ethnicity and language, as well types of enterprise (co-operative or social purpose enterprise), products or services produced.

RESULTS

The selected enterprises were as follows:

Diversity of ISISE Selected Social Enterprise Partners

Social Enterprise	Contact	Legal	City	Province	Language	Gender	Ethnicity	Product	Years
<i>International Women's Catering Co-op</i>	<i>Lee Fuge</i>	<i>Coop</i>	<i>Victoria</i>	<i>BC</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>Food products</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Ethnicity Catering</i>	<i>Linh Bui</i>	<i>NFP</i>	<i>Calgary</i>	<i>Alb</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>85% Women</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>Catered Food</i>	<i>3+</i>
<i>Enviro-Safe Cleaning Worker Co-op Ltd</i>	<i>Musaghi Kizikilwa</i>	<i>Co-op</i>	<i>Winnipeg</i>	<i>Man</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>Togo Uganda</i>	<i>Commercial Cleaning</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>ANAK / ANAK Publishing Worker Co-op</i>	<i>Darlyne Bautista</i>	<i>Co-op</i>	<i>Winnipeg</i>	<i>Man</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>Pilipino</i>	<i>Pilipino Books</i>	<i>3/0</i>
<i>Facilitating Inclusion Co-op</i>	<i>Ashley Dryburgh</i>	<i>Co-op</i>	<i>Hamilton</i>	<i>Ont</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	<i>Workshop Facilitation</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Coopérative de Travail Maintenance 1 Éplus</i>	<i>Nelson Ovalle</i>	<i>Co-op</i>	<i>Ottawa / Gatineau</i>	<i>Ont. Que</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Women 60%</i>	<i>Lat. Am</i>	<i>Employment/Cleaning</i>	<i>2/0</i>

Appendix F: Business Plan Assessments.

David Sherwood of Brunet Sherwood Consultants / (613) 674-2042/ sherwood@hawk.igs.net and Pascal Billard of Sol-Air Consultants Inc / (450) 373-1777 / pascal@sol-air.net. Below are the comments and suggestions resulting from the External Review of the Social Enterprise Business Plan submitted to the Immigrant Settlement and Integration through Social Enterprise Initiative (ISISE) of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (Canadian CED Network).

1. International Women’s Catering Cooperative
2. Ethnicity Catering
3. ANAK Publishing Worker Cooperative Ltd.
4. Enviro-safe Cleaning Worker Co-op
5. Facilitating Inclusion Cooperative
6. Maintenance 1a+

1. International Women’s Catering Cooperative

Final Draft after March 17 conference call

International Women’s Catering Cooperative Victoria, B.C	
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General Comment:

The external review consultants find that this is a sound business model and a good business plan.

Business Plan Strengths:

Good description of the nature of the social enterprise: employment and training for recent immigrants, helping them adapt to life in Canada through a catering business. Quality ethnic food. Experienced core staff. Track record.
 Market research (including customer surveys and interviews)
 Good use of existing business records.
 Descriptions of the food are mouth watering.
 Appendix material is extensive and useful.

Additions that would enhance the Business Plan:

- Photos of your products (eg. Page 8)

The Business Model, as we understood it:

Your past model was to provide seasonal employment to members of a small cooperative that remained stable over a long time period. The future model is to provide year round income and some membership renewal. With your experience, you can offer realistic training and adaptation to life in Canada to recent immigrants, both the new members and some non-member contract workers. Your strengths are excellent quality, reasonable prices and very experienced core staff. In our view, the fact that there are several staff protects you from risks associated with any staff turnover. With appropriate new marketing and equipment, you would move into new market outlets such as frozen food.

Suggested enhancements for you to consider

- Based on the phone conversation, we understood less growth than we understood from reading the plan. Consider clarifying this.
- Indicate a contingency plan to access external HR advice if there are any staff tensions resulting from growth and change.
- The shift in business model will require more formalized mechanisms for communications, scheduling, tracking and similar. This has been addressed in the Business Plan and we encourage attending low cost small business seminars.
- You clarified that there could have been a reserve fund in the past, it was simply not needed. It would be good to add this to the narrative and indicate that the coop realizes it will need one in future for the revised business model.

Provide more financial information:

1-Potential for growth, for market demand. An “estimate”, not a “prediction”. To help you close the loop of how much revenue you need for your expansion plans, and whether it seems likely to be there.

2-You have the advantage of an existing coop with tracking of past financials. So use that to produce monthly cash flow statements for the next 3 years, showing a reasonable growth rate. That will assist with implementation planning. When to recruit more members, and how many? When will the coop be able to pay for which equipment? How will that equipment feed back into business growth. Etc.

3- Clearer tables of Revenues / Expenditures, Profit (or loss)

4-Prepare an Income Statement for 3 years.

5-For the marketing and publicity items, a breakdown of the costs of the various items.

Ideas to explore:

Rather than mention any worker health issues, phrase the issue as the importance of reducing risk to experienced staff in terms of repetitive strain injuries and other potential causes of downtime.

Include references to Knowledge Dissemination (KD) in the narrative, as well as revenue and expense lines for KD (whether site visits, off-site presentations, internships &c.) that will ideally show a surplus or at least be revenue neutral.

The potential to cycle more non-member workers through the cooperative, to provide training to new immigrants. That could be a revenue line, or revenue neutral but saving staff labour. Some funders might be willing to pay for that economic and social benefit.

2. Ethnicity Catering

Final Draft, after March 17 conference call

Ethnicity Catering

Calgary, Alberta

General Comment:

The external review consultants find that this is a sound business model and a good business plan.

Business Plan Strengths:

Excellent description of the essential nature of the social enterprise: training recent immigrants and helping them adapt to life in Canada through a catering business. Regular intake of new trainees. Quality ethnic food. Experienced staff.

Good use of data from existing business (however see comment below on making even better use of it).

Realism about options for the future.

Simple information to add:

- page 23 mentions the coop has great graphics, add them to the document.

Additions that would strengthen the Business Plan:

- Interviews with / endorsements from, existing clients, external confirmation of quality service.
- Interviews with potential clients, anecdotal external confirmation of potential demand.
- Concerning competitors, number listed in yellow pages in 2000 / 2010, for example. Identify any which are in the same niche of ethnic food and provide some information / analysis on them.
- Make explicit your verbal reassurance that you have a provision for external HR advice or training. Simply provide a few details, not a major revision.

Questions, things that were not clear to us:

-None, this Business Plan is very clear.

Business Model, as we understand it:

You provide realistic training and adaptation to life in Canada to recent immigrants by employing them temporarily in a catering business. As a social enterprise, it has to compete with the open market on sales price, but can not be expected to compete on labour costs because you are constantly training recent immigrants. You acknowledge this in your Plan. If financial compensation for the social good is built into the business model, it works.

Your excellent quality, reasonable prices and noble social goal are especially attractive to (but not limited to) the NGO sector. Your proposed marketing strategies are adapted for that. One of your strengths is experienced staff. In our view, the fact that there are several staff protects you from risks associated with any staff turnover.

Your plan expresses prudence about shifting the model to frozen food or cafeterias, which is wise.

Provide more financial information:

1-Potential for growth, for market demand. An “estimate”, not a “prediction”. To help you close the loop of how much revenue you need for your expansion plans, and whether it seems likely to be there.

2-Page 42, line item “Grant Funding”. Clarify how much of this is already in place, or promised in writing, or from existing sources likely to be renewed. (versus future funding applications).

3-You have the advantage of an existing coop with apparently great tracking of past financials. So use that to produce monthly cash flow statements for the next 36 months, showing a reasonable growth rate. That will assist with implementation planning. At what point would the coop need core staff? When will it be able to pay for which equipment? How will that equipment feed back into business growth. Etc.

4-Prepare an Income Statement for the next 3 years.

5- Clearer tables of Revenues / Expenditures, Profit (or loss) for next 3 years. Consider alternate scenarios showing higher or lower than expected growth.

6-In the Marketing section, a breakdown of the costs of the various items.

Ideas:

Can you get on Cable TV? Is there a community radio station? Can you stage an event that will get free media coverage? Do some research and reading on this, to accompany your “launch”.)

Can you get your training “recognized” or certified by an external body, such as a community college? In Quebec, there is a mechanism by which staff can become recognized as trainers, and receive some ministry of education or training income.

3. ANAK Publishing Worker Cooperative Ltd.

Final Draft, after March 17 conference call

<p>ANAK Publishing Worker Cooperative Ltd. <i>Winnipeg, Manitoba</i></p>

General Comment:

The external review consultants find that this business plan is a reasonably good draft, but it needs strengthening in several respects before it can be used as a foundation for the social enterprise.

The Business Model, as we understand it:

This is to be a "worker cooperative" that will write and publish Filipiniana textbooks, children's literature, and other publications. It would sell to various book sales outlets, the university, and the ANAK Filipino cultural group (which would purchase texts that support its teaching /training /cultural functions). Another projected client of this coop is a legally separate Filipiniana and book sales coop that has yet to be established.

The target market is primarily text books and youth books, whose sales are more predictable and have a greater profit margin in the book business (which is very competitive). This market also allows for inventory control (printing in small batches).

Beginning as a home-based business means lower overhead costs, and fewer opportunities to incur operating losses.

Strengths:

- Subsidiary of an existing organization
- No direct competition
- Potential of mutually beneficial cultural activities
- Existing network of academic institutions and community organizations
- Description of existing management

Simple information to add or revise:

- Convert the survey raw data in appendix into percentages of respondents, while noting the number of respondents (N=_).
- Results of the survey in the body of the document should be given in a table format.

There is a certain amount of repetition in the text, or partial information on the same subject in two locations (eg. survey mentioned on page 6, but details on page 12) (eg. Page 8 section 4 – Products and Services is well explained, but with some repetition between pages 8 & 9). It would benefit from a good edit, try to consolidate and make more concise.

Additions to the draft Business Plan:

- The review of competition is a good start. You have identified and briefly described regional publishers and ethnic publishers. But what can you learn from them, in the sense of “business intelligence”? What are their business practices? Can you obtain financial information? Do they sell via Internet? How many staff do they have? Do they sell at a higher profit margin to compensate for low volumes (or perhaps reflecting a niche or ‘captive’ market)? How do they communicate with their client base? Etc.
- Interview Franco-Manitoban book and publication outlet(s), what is their business model?
- Provide publishing industry statistics demonstrating superior profit margins for your targets: textbooks and childrens’ books.
- Document, perhaps in appendix, the existing ANAK cultural activities, especially use of books and texts for teaching.
- Especially document any existing contracts or probable repeat business.
- If the target market includes bookstores, then the market research needs to survey bookstores for interest in selling Filipino books, as the current survey info in appendix is more focused on sales to individuals.
- Specify the nature of the training that is mentioned
- The storage of books is unclear. Should this be part of the publishing business plan? (Or is it part of the separate bookstore coop’s business plan?)

Financials- clarifications, additional information

Page 9 – There is a combination of what people are paid to produce the literature and the sales price of the books. Either everything has to be explained more clearly, or the sales figures should be taken out and placed in a revenue stream section.

The household income range in the BP actually seems low. Need to demonstrate the community places a priority on books in their family budgets. [may be in survey, if so, cross-reference].

Page 16 - \$ sign with no number.

What is the pricing mechanism in the book industry? You note at one point the aim is to multiply the base price by 5 in keeping with the industry norm. But can you gain some price advantage because of the niche market? Are textbooks and childrens' books the same as novels?

Page 18 – Personnel: Are they producing the work or administering the co-op? Are they all at 20 hours/week? (current text says “30 hours”).

You might wish to do a “sensitivity analysis” i.e. if sell 1000 copies; or 500; or 1500; what is the impact on operational costs and net yield?

If the \$37,000 received to date has established and strengthened the cooperative, make that clear so that it is seen as a good investment.

Clarify that the \$10,000 available is in the form of a loan from the owner-members.

Using this research, revise the cost estimates and revenue estimates. 36 month cash flow statements. 3 years Income Statements.

Idea: Have you considered the possibility of writing training manuals for employers who hire a lot of Filipino employees?

4. Enviro-safe Cleaning Worker Co-op

Final Draft, after March 18 conference call

Enviro-Safe Cleaning
Worker Cooperative Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

General Comment:

This Business Plan has good potential, but is incomplete. ***No financial information was provided.*** *The consultants cannot recommend this project on the basis of the draft we were provided.*

The comments below are based solely on the draft text received.

Strengths of the draft text of the Business Plan:

- Existing incorporated coop
- Experienced owner-workers
- English and French spoken
- “Environmental” market niche
- A new contract with Housing Plus
- Low overhead costs (home-based business, no need for storage)

Suggestions to build on those strengths:

- One paragraph of biographical information on each current owner-worker, demonstrating their experience and role in the coop, with a fuller on page CV in the appendix.

- Exploration of a market niche of Franco-Manitoban non-government organizations (Make preliminary enquiries, note results. Do they value having cleaning service in French? If yes, have a French version of your business name.)
- Provide previous year (multi-year) financials for the existing coop. Revenues and Expenditures in detail.

Additions to the draft Business Plan:

The details of the Housing Plus contract are really important (Written contract? Duration? Location of properties? Amount? Timing?) Knowing that the client cannot predict their own growth rate, at least have a letter from the client in appendix, quote portions of their business plan or documents as to their aspirations. This will validate the pre-existing relationship and that it is a potentially important client.

- External market research: document what a sampling of local competitors are charging their clients and are paying their employees.
- Interviews with / endorsements from, existing clients, external confirmation of your quality service.
- Interviews with potential clients, at least anecdotal external confirmation of market potential.
- Information on the process required to obtain contracts in Winnipeg (public tender, word of mouth, do clients sign contracts or not, do they make multi-year commitments, etc.)
- Clarify that current worker-owners are only part-time with the coop, part-time other employers, and the first goal is to become full time with the coop.

Financials

Page 5: At the bottom of the page, it speaks of 'quality, availability and honesty' but not about price. There should be some documentation to back up such anecdotal claims, even if only verbal feedback from clients that comes from telephone interviews.

Pricing – the figures need to be turned into a table that makes the margins clear and that demonstrates that the margin between charge to client and wage to worker is enough to pay the labour and equipment and overhead costs of the coop.

- Prepare estimated monthly cash flow for the next 36 months, with as much detail as possible on cost line items and revenues.
- Income Statements for the next 3 years.
- Prepare a summary table with "scenarios" based on modest or more aggressive growth. These will assist the coop in its business planning, at what point would it need new equipment, more staff, administrative assistance?

Marketing, target markets

How do you access new markets? We suggest you invest some time on this issue and add your findings to the plan.

It may require patience to break into the institutional, corporate and government markets where there tend to be contract terms that run for significant periods of time.

Is there a niche market of sympathetic clients such as other co-ops, credit unions, CED organizations, who might prefer to hire a worker-owner coop?
How about environmental organizations? Who would prefer to engage environmentally friendly cleaning services?

The more you target specific segments that you know are likely to be friendly to Enviro-safe, the stronger the BP will be because you will channel your efforts.

5. Facilitating Inclusion Cooperative

Final Draft , after March 17 conference call

<p>Facilitating Inclusion Cooperative Hamilton, Ontario</p>

General Comment:

The external review consultants find that this is a sound business model and a good business plan.

Business Plan Strengths:

Description of services to be offered: facilitation / research / training.

Statement of goals and objectives.

Competitive analysis.

Description of typical customers.

Simple information to add:

- A short biographical description of those currently involved (one or two paragraphs each in the text and one or two pages each of CV in appendix)
- Census data proving recent immigration levels. (this was provided after the first review, add to text)

Additions that would strengthen the Business Plan:

- Interviews with / endorsements from, existing clients, external confirmation of quality service.
- Although there is a good description of the target client base, it is important to document some estimate of their current and future demand for the type of services you will offer. This might consist of lists, of letters, or of interviews, for example.

The Business Model, as we understand it:

The largest revenue stream is from facilitation/training for established organizations and community based research services. There is a special niche in areas like immigration, cross-cultural and community based issues. These services are provided by a small number of contractors with high skill sets. FIC provides in-depth training in these services to supplement the international education, skills, and experience of the contractors. Contractors receive Canadian work experience and Canadian cultural competency while clients receive specialized services and access to wider cultural communities. The training of recent immigrants is an important activity area, but is unlikely to be self funding. This is acknowledged in the Plan.

We agree that the per diem of \$480 (\$60@8 hrs) is at the low end of the market for quality professional services, so there is a potential for higher revenues. There is not much downside or

potential for business losses, because overhead costs are very low.

Issue to explore

We suggest a review of the two staff positions, an Executive Director and a Business Development Officer. The plan should relate the need for two staff to an increase in business volume or how it would enable the coop to surmount business development barriers. We suggest a comparative analysis of the costs and merit of hiring a marketing specialist consultant on contract. We suggest you explore mechanisms to enable all coop members and supporters to be involved in marketing. As part of your comparables research, review how private sector consulting firms of similar size are structured, or some comparable NGOs that engage in marketing.

Clarify Operations Plan, page 19+

Some of the line items would be more appropriate if re-scheduled to later time frames. We think the quality of this business plan allows the coop to move quickly to action, scheduling some strategic planning review activity later, as part of a feedback loop.

Additional financial information:

- 1-Prepare an Income Statement for the next 3 years.
- 2- Prepare a monthly cash flow forecast, revenues and expenditures, for 36 months, based on what you consider a moderate growth scenario. You may wish to provide summary versions with high and low growth scenarios.
- 3- On page 27+, clarify the status of “granted” funds. Those with a written commitment from the funder, those likely to be renewed by an existing funder, those which will be the subject of future grant applications.

6. Maintenance 1a+

Après la rencontre du 19 mars

<p>COOP MAINTENANCE A1 + Gatineau, Québec</p>	
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1-COMMENTAIRES GÉNÉRAUX

Très bonne analyse du marché. Les consultants approuvent de ce plan, avec quelques suggestions, corrections et bonifications, tel que suit.

Suggestion pour bonifier le plan d'affaires :

Présenter la coopérative au début du plan d'affaires :

- Historique depuis 2007;
- Ses membres;
- Ses réalisations;
- La problématique;
- Justification du plan d'affaires,

2-DESCRIPTION DU MARCHÉ

Page 21 : *Les taux de réponse des organismes du secteur public et du secteur communautaire sont plus élevés par rapport à celui du secteur privé. Ne correspond pas au graphique.*

Page 24 : *Le potentiel du secteur public, vérifier concordance entre texte et graphique.*

Question : Est-ce que la provenance géographique de la Coop (Québec) a une influence sur les décisions d'achat des clients ontariens?

L'analyse du marché est claire et précise, bien approfondie et les conclusions objectives et réalistes.

3-FOURNISSEURS ET GROSSISTES

Idéalement il aurait fallu avoir quelques soumissions (ou une liste de prix) pour des équipements.

4-MODÈLE OFFRE DE SERVICES ET CONTRAT TYPE

Le tableau de la page 40 n'est pas clair, une explication serait nécessaire.

5-PLAN DE COMERCIALISATION

Suggestion : Rencontrer en personne une première fois les acheteurs potentiels. Cette méthode est plus efficace que des envois, qui peuvent venir par la suite.

Logo : Devrait être bilingue?

Un tableau détaillé résumant les coûts de marketing faciliterait la compréhension (actions, coûts, échéancier).

6-LES RESSOURCES HUMAINES, MATÉRIELLES ET FINANCIÈRES

Suggestion : Présenter les ressources humaines au début avec la présentation de la coopérative. À ce point présenter les ressources humaines supplémentaires.

7-PRÉVISIONS FINANCIÈRES

Hypothèses de vente : Clarifier le salaire horaire, on parle de 15\$/h, puis on prévoit 22 à 25 \$/h. Il est préférable de conserver 15 \$/h et de verser des ristournes en fin d'année s'il y a des surplus, ce qui est justement l'avantage de la formule coopérative.

Page 54 : Charges sociales de 8,8% en Ontario, mais la coopérative a son siège social au Québec...

Problème /Dilemme

Compte tenu des résultats de l'étude de marché, qui documente les difficultés de percer dans un marché pourtant vaste, il semble bien hasardeux de se baser sur une croissance des ventes de 100%.... Il serait plus réaliste de miser sur une croissance annuelle de 50%. L'atteinte de 15 employés se ferait la quatrième année.