

Community Economic Development and Poverty in Canada

Government and Public Policy

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“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice”

Martin Luther King

Abstract

This study takes advantage of many years of direct action research, based in consulting and working with people across Ontario and Canada and focused generally at looking at the experience of poverty. Throughout two major consultations, “The People’s Parliament on Poverty” at the provincial level and “the Federal Contribution to Reducing Poverty in Canada” at the federal level it became obvious that there was no real coordinated policy effort that combines economic sustainability and social benefit on behalf of those most at risk and marginalized in our communities. The ideological divide in government combined with a selfish turf protection in the delivery of a patchwork of programs and services has conspired to block any meaningful effort to deal comprehensively with a growing and deepening poverty reality. This study, conducted through a literature search, conversations in focus groups, interviews and a review of the findings of the two consultations mentioned above, looks at the potential for Community Economic Development (CED) to be a catalyst, or to play a central role, in a national anti poverty strategy. The study concludes that there certainly is potential for CED to play this role, but it will require a commitment by all partners to be open to the contributions and efforts of others, collaborative action and a sincere focus on the needs of fragile and abandoned communities. A legislative framework at the Federal Government level with leadership and resources could drive a CED action plan that would incent regions, sectors and local initiatives to engage on a larger scale. The Quebec Social Economy and the work being done by the Chantier de l’économie sociale, has a lot of practical experience to offer the rest of Canada.

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Introduction

I think the theory that underlies CED is pretty solid, and I think it is actually pretty well shared among most of our membership and people on the ground. The question is how do you articulate it, and how do you apply it in a way that is both feasible and meaningful to a broader audience (Michael Toye, CCEDNet Executive Director, Focus Group, Ottawa, June 13, 2012).

The genesis of this research is found in an effort in the early 1980s to establish alternate approaches to community economic development and job creation in the form of a soup kitchen in the inner city of Sault Ste. Marie that served at its height 350 lunch time meals daily. The largest employer in Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma Steel, had permanently laid off half its workforce - 6,000 employees. A resource group was established by local faith and community leaders to support and encourage the growth of co-ops and worker owned enterprises. This was much more complicated than anticipated and not supported in any significant way by government understanding, regulatory framework or funding. Greg McLeod from Cape Breton became a valuable resource to this group as he had designed an approach unique to the economic challenges, opportunities and government infrastructure of that region of Nova Scotia. Northern Ontario and Cape Breton were both natural resource based economies in the middle of a difficult downturn. He was studying the quite successful Mondragon experiment in industrial co-operatives happening in the Basque area of Spain. These were social justice, faith based initiatives rooted in a belief that it was easier and less damaging to individuals and family and cheaper in the longer term to keep people from falling into those deeper and more

complicated levels of material, social and spiritual poverty that happens when people are separated for too long from their occupation or place of work. This was articulated very effectively at a community forum in Sault Ste. Marie by a bishop who spoke of the profound and fundamental impact on human beings and their sense of well being when they first lose their job and subsequently run out of employment insurance and have to apply for welfare. There had to be a better way to respond to this kind of threat than simply shutting down industries and laying off people.

This research continues from this moment in time into examining how government in the 1990s and early 2000s provincially and from 2004 to 2011 federally responded to increasing poverty during a significant shift to a neoliberal policy framework and how this impacted on social development thinking and programming. The ideological political divide made it impossible to find common ground and the consequent cuts to budgets and an aggressive move to privatization created competition and reduced incentive to cooperate as organizations moved initially to protect the little they had left.

Poverty and its impact has been a stubborn reality for many communities, families, and individuals across Canada since the Great Depression. The level of child poverty, over 10% since the late 1980s, in spite of numerous efforts to mitigate this number, indicates a failure that hurts us all. An example of this was the unanimous agreement in 1989 by the House of Commons to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. The MPs, acting on good principles and the right intention, failed to adopt a coherent plan to make it actually happen. The significant

ideological divide, reflected in the approach by different political parties to the role of government and the private sector, has been most keenly felt by those with little power at the lower socio-economic strata of society. The drive to reflect values in every expression of both private and public life, particularly by those of the neo-liberal and extreme left persuasion, has made it very difficult to find common ground. An unwillingness to consider that either side might have something worth considering and that the individual and society are better served when all work together, could be hindering the development of initiatives and approaches with the potential to make a significant difference.

In this ideological climate Community Economic Development (CED) has shown itself to be an intriguing policy option, and with some effort and support, might bridge this divide and get us to a better place. This study will look at the role CED could or should play in an effective strategy for poverty reduction and elimination. It will also consider a role for Government and Public Policy in a CED strategy to reduce and eradicate poverty in Canada. This research will consider the literature, and reflect the conversations and input from two focus groups and three interviews with public policy activists. It will also consider the work of two significant consultations (one formal and one informal) at the provincial and federal legislative levels of government. The Quebec experience developing a very vibrant social economic sector is looked at for inspiration and practical example. Most importantly it will be nested in the stories of those living in poverty.

1.1 Background

In early 2001 an exercise in participatory community action called “The Peoples Parliament on Poverty” carried out consultations across Ontario listening to people affected by the very damaging policies of the Conservative government first elected in 1995. During these months in early 2001 the Kimberly Rogers tragedy unfolded which exposed, in a very blunt way, the ultimate impact of bad public policy on marginalized and at risk people. Kimberly Rogers died in her apartment on the hottest day of August 2001, while serving a court imposed sentence of house arrest for accepting a student loan while also collecting social assistance, not knowing that recent changes in legislation had made such “double” benefits a criminal act. The Sudbury Star wrote in an editorial (Aug. 2001), “We join the voices calling for an inquest into Kimberly Rogers’s death. What happened to her is criminal.” Subsequently, the voices of other people, whose lives had been positively affected by these government programs prior to the new legislation’s enactment were raised and heard.

Extraordinary efforts have been made at times to come up with a blueprint that would deal in a comprehensive and serious way with this terrible reality for too many. One substantial attempt looked at was the work commissioned in 1986 by the Ontario minority NDP/Liberal government led by former Family Court Judge George Thomson. His report, tabled in 1988 entitled “Transitions”, was lauded and welcomed by a broad sector of society and across all political lines. It spoke of:

each person being of inherent worth and should be presumed capable of reason, choice, self realization, and independence; Each person is interdependent with other

members of society and needs to participate in, and be related to, family and community in order to fulfill his or her potential (Preamble).

The report goes on to state that society is responsible for assisting its members in their development and integration, and must do so “*within a framework of economic equality and social justice*” (p8).

More recently two major works were tabled with the House of Commons in Ottawa. The Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in its Report “Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada”(Hoepfner, 2010), called on the federal government to immediately commit to a federal action plan to reduce poverty in Canada (Hoepfner, p. 5). “In 2007, low income remained a significant challenge for 2.95 million Canadians” (Hoepfner, p. 1). Throughout the 59 recommendations there is a call for comprehensive, integrated, and multi faceted collaboration between the federal government, provinces, territories, First Nations and communities. There is one reference to the Social Economy (Hoepfner, p. 236) in this comprehensive report: “Members of the Committee support using the social economy as a policy tool for reducing low income and promoting social inclusion among the most disadvantaged groups in Canadian society” (Hoepfner, p. 238). Simultaneous to this report’s release in June 2010 was the tabling of Bill C-545 in the House of Commons, “An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada”. This Bill defined poverty as “the condition of a human being who does not have the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain economic self reliance and to facilitate their integration into and participation in society” (p4). This was taken directly from the Quebec Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion which

evolved primarily from the work done in that province to integrate anti poverty strategies with community economic development. This work and the efforts made to provide input (hundreds of organizations and individuals from across Canada) indicate a continuing strong interest in finding an answer or developing a strategy.

The information and research supporting these pieces of work was examined in this research to determine the potential for Community and Community Economic development (CED) to have an impact or be central to an effective anti poverty strategy for Canada.

There is significant conflict and debate about how to deal successfully with poverty, much of it political and ideological. There are also many theories and approaches which have been talked about and implemented with limited success. Many useful public programs such as health care, education and public housing have been tried but found wanting. There is a huge divide between those who advocate for public, civic entitlement strategies rooted in human rights, and the adherents of a neo-liberal, individualistic and private laissez faire tack. There are some who advocate for big top down government driven initiatives while others think all the answers lie in community based endeavours. Several themes emerge from the literature that indicate a lack of collaboration and meaningful civic engagement. Could CED bridge these divides and bring a more holistic, comprehensive set of responses that would actually work in everybody's best interest?

This study explores how CED approaches may impact poverty and community in a way that reflects both the literature search and lived experience. There is a critique of government and CED with a view to finding the most helpful role for these two important vehicles in eliminating poverty.

1.2 Research Questions

This research proposes to explore two questions:

What role can or should Community Economic Development play in an effective strategy for poverty elimination?

Given Canada's history of collective action in the face of social and economic threat is there a role today for CED in combating poverty as it continues to effect, in ever more challenging ways, the lives of our communities, families and individuals? There is a growing realization that the cost of poverty is not only social but also significantly economic. Research carried out by the Ontario Association of Food Banks in 2007 indicates that the cost to the Canadian economy of not addressing poverty is over \$85 billion annually when such things as healthcare, crime, and lost productivity are factored (Ontario Association of Food Banks annual report, 2007). Since poverty is pervasive and effecting more and different sectors of the population, (for example, the newly expanding numbers of the working poor) is there a way to be creative in how we might develop aspects or different approaches of CED to bring about positive change? The

interface of CED and more traditional business development models is explored. The impact of globalization and neo-liberal economic practices is also considered. The Quebec and First Peoples experience will be of great value in this exploration as they have and continue to use community and collective action in their response to economic threat.

How can Government and Public Policy support a Community Economic Development strategy to reduce and eradicate poverty in Canada?

There are good public policies and programs such as the Canada Pension Plan, National Health Care, and the Child Tax Credit which have significantly reduced poverty (or at least the threat of poverty) as well as bad public policy which has seriously harmed low income people, such as that which resulted in the death of Kimberly Rogers. Governments committed to and respectful of government process with proper consultation would not push social policy into the criminal justice system and make it illegal to accept a student loan while collecting welfare. They would also not end all support to individuals trying to better themselves by going to school. It is therefore imperative to explore options for government initiatives that would support CED efforts to reduce and eradicate poverty.

2. Methodology

This study uses a variety of methods to explore the experience of poverty in Canada and the potential for applying CED approaches to finding a solution. Archival documentation from both

the Federal and (Ontario) Provincial governments, which look at poverty and search for solutions, are important pieces of this research. Focus groups, held in Ottawa and Toronto, as well as three interviews, two in person and one via the telephone, with professionals knowledgeable, experienced and active in the fields of social policy and CED also informed this report.

The literature review explores the relationship between CED and poverty looking at different approaches and applications. It critiques some larger global initiatives such as the work of Muhammad Yunus and micro credit as well as looking at the US and Canadian experience.

2.1 Archival Documentation

Substantial personal archives which include 120 hours of testimony from the People's Parliament on Poverty (November, 2000 through to May 2001) have been reviewed. These were developed as a result of meetings in small and large communities across Ontario listening to the stories of people living or dealing with poverty in 2001. As an MPP and critic for social policy in the Ontario legislature, I organized and chaired these consultations as a response to the lack of interest and the implementation of harmful public policy by the government of the day. Significant media coverage of Kimberly Roger's death as a result of changes in legislation and the subsequent Coroner's inquest forms part of this archive.

A second archive, resulting from the extensive consultations and research carried out to prepare the report tabled in the House of Commons (Hoepfner, 2010) and Bill C- 545 were also

explored for relevant information. I served as a member of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities throughout this process, and moved the motion as a Federal MP that initiated the study, and gave leadership such that it continued to completion and the tabling of a ground breaking report through two different parliaments. My offices also lead the consultation, and drafting of Bill C - 545 which I subsequently introduced for First Reading in the House of Commons.

2.2 Focus Groups

The archival material was augmented by two focus groups conducted in Ottawa and Toronto respectively that included people familiar with this work and are involved in the development and critique of public policy. These two focus groups also included members of the CED community. Participants were invited from those who have made and continue to make contributions to the development of public policy targeted at reducing and eliminating poverty. They included people familiar with work done previously to inform public policy and some participants represented sectors already engaged in implementing the different approaches and theories outlined in the literature review. CED voices were important contributors at these tables. The archival testimony, interviews, and focus group transcripts were analyzed using grounded theory analysis.

Getting people to attend the focus groups was not difficult as there is keen interest in poverty reduction and elimination by the targeted groups of Social Policy and CED analysts,

practitioners and activists. In Ottawa Rob Rainer and Harriet McLaughlin from Canada Without Poverty (CWP), Joe Gunn, and Simon Lewchuk from Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), Michael Toye from CCEDNET, Kevin Dorse from Credit Union Central, Chandra Pasma and Stephen Foster, Senior Policy Advisors to the Leader of the Official Opposition, Doug Pawson, Causeway Work Centre (Social Enterprises) were all very pleased to discuss the potential for CED to be a catalyst in a national anti poverty strategy. The same can be said about the smaller Focus Group in Toronto comprised of Michael Shapcott of the Wellesley Institute, John Stapleton from Open Policy Ontario, Anne Jamieson of the Toronto Enterprise Fund and Sarah Jordison, writer and former social policy analyst. These were all people with years of experience researching, and developing recommendations for public social policy and had knowledge and experience of the potential for CED to be an effective vehicle in an anti poverty strategy. It was important to hear from people who could critique the present circumstance and from some who knew the history.

2.3 Interviews

Three interviews were carried out with people knowledgeable and experienced in CED. The first was done in person in Ottawa with John Anderson who has a long history of research, communications and advocacy in social policy with the Canadian Council on Social Development, Canadian Co-operative Association and now the Office of the Official Opposition in Ottawa. The second, also in person was with Murray MacAdam, writer and social activist. Murray is a Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant with the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. He

has worked for World Vision, Citizens for Public Justice and is the Editor of “From Corporate Greed to Common Good” (1998). The third was a telephone interview with Nancy Neamtan, President and Executive Director of the Chantier de l’économie sociale in Quebec, who is a highly visible and respected practitioner of CED in Quebec with a wealth of knowledge and understanding. She has worked with governments of all political persuasions in furthering the cause of CED.

Each of these sessions (focus group and interviews) were recorded and transcribed with permission.

2.4 Ethical Issues

This research was carried out under the supervision of Dr. Gayle Broad, Algoma University and Dr J.J. McMurtry, York University, both Adjunct Professors with Cape Breton University. The major ethical concern in this research revolved around the Kimberly Rogers tragedy. To get permission to research and write about Kimberly’s story I met with the family (mother, father) in their home and accompanied Myrel Gaetano (mother, since deceased) to a public demonstration held with the intent to shed light on the circumstances surrounding her death. I also felt I needed to have credibility in the eyes of those close to this case and particularly in Sudbury. My participation in meetings and rallies with the group that evolved from Sudbury called “The Committee to Remember Kimberly Rogers” and the leadership role I played in calling for an inquest created a relationship. They subsequently entrusted me with their archive

of media clippings. We all attended the inquest and I led a province wide campaign to have the inquest's recommendations implemented.

The purpose of the research was shared in advance and permissions sought to use names in the report.

2.5 Limitations

The People's Parliament on Poverty archives are dated (2001/2002). These consultations were narrow in their scope. They were focussed primarily on the impact of government policy on communities and people.

The people interviewed were a small sample of the many people and organizations involved in CED across the country. There was nobody from the right of the political spectrum interviewed or in the focus groups. This could be a further complimentary and challenging research paper. My experience however in parliament and in committee is that the right doesn't know, understand or appreciate the value of CED and so at this time may actually have been an unnecessary obstacle to the discussion I wanted to have. There is a lot of work needing to be done to educate and raise awareness amongst as Loxley puts it:

orthodox economic theorists...who have no interest in CED and are preoccupied with models of profit maximization, short run efficiency and individual self interest (Loxley, 2005).

I invited some CED practitioners, including Nancy Neamtan, to appear before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in 2006. The Conservative members were engaged and impressed with the amount of investment, economic activity and wealth generated and the employment created in Quebec and across Canada in CED. The interest ended there, however it did lead me to believe that there was potentially a bridge here to do a number of things including dealing with poverty.

3. Literature Review

The following key words and concepts were used to develop a preliminary literature review: “community”, “community development”, “community economic development”, “social development”, and “poverty”.

The literature creates a framework with potential building blocks. It also presents a critique of concepts and approaches to reducing poverty. There are, however, many important developments and approaches to using community and community economic development (CED) as a way to reduce or eliminate poverty that are worth considering. The literature indicates substantial interest and attempts to use CED to better the lot of those at risk or marginalized in our communities. From large neo-liberal approaches (Yunus, 2010) to more localized attempts at “transforming or reforming capitalism, towards a theory of community economic development” (Loxley, 2007) much theory, research and practice has been developed and examined.

There are many small enterprises across Canada that have found a way to deliver a needed service or contribute to the common good but most of them are marginally stable financially and fail to provide work that would keep a family or individual out of poverty. This fits into a pattern driven by the neo-liberal economic system that is producing more and more precarious work which is increasing substantially the number of working poor in the country.

The United Nations in 1955 defined CED as “a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its actual participation and the fullest reliance upon the communities’ initiative.” McLeod in 1984 defined it as “a cooperative attempt by local people to take control of the socioeconomic destiny of the community ... to respond to local needs as community members perceive them” (Loxley, 2007, p8). The preferred definition however for this research is dealt with in a later chapter and supports the direction of the work being done in Quebec on the Social Economy.

3.1 Poverty

Canada has no official definition or measurement of poverty and it is a contested term:

The conceptualisation and measurement of poverty is complex and continues to be a source of debate among poverty reduction advocates, social policy analysts and policy makers. In general, poverty is defined either in absolute terms-inability to obtain the basic necessities of life-or in relative terms-being at a relative disadvantage economically and socially in comparison to others living in the same community (Hoeppner, 2010, p. 9).

The literature also provides some examples of efforts to find a common definition. For example, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, in 1995, put forward this definition:

Poverty has various manifestations including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to insure sustainable livelihoods; hunger, and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision making and in civil, social and cultural life... (Sizya, 2001, p. 3).

Closer to home, Quebec arrived at a definition included in its Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion which forms the basis of a definition adopted in the Federal Bill, C-545, tabled for first reading on June 16th, 2010. Rooted in a Human Rights framework it reads:

For the purposes of this Act, 'poverty' means the condition of a human being who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain economic self sufficiency or to facilitate integration and participation in society (Quebec, An Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion, R.S.Q.,L-7, chapt.1-2).

There is a very definite connection in the literature between economic poverty and social exclusion. Given the potential to see Quebec as a role model in this work this definition is the most appropriate for this study.

3.2 Community

Community is often seen or written about as the vehicle or entity through which poverty can most effectively be studied and responded to. There is a sense that poverty could be seen as a failure of community. Community is complex and so lends it itself to great debate and discussion. "There are many conflicting definitions of community" (Loxley, 2007, P40).

Community encompasses a spatial, social, cultural or psycho cultural dimension. It can be a slippery fellowship of commonality of interest with profound uncertainties and disagreements. How does community relate (relevance) in societies of high levels of urbanization, widespread geographical mobility, and the formalization of service delivery systems? (Loxley, 2007, P10).

Craig (2007) claims there are typically three types of community:

- Geographical community, a collection of people living within a fairly well-defined physical space.
- Community of identity. Within and between geographical communities there might be a wide range of communities of identity which may have differing needs and interests, a strong sense of community, defined as 'a body with some common values, norms and goals in which each member regards the common goal as her/his own.
- Issue-based communities focused on particular issues such as improving housing conditions, improving road safety at school crossings, or protecting aspects of the environment through campaigns around river pollution.

However misunderstood or difficult to define, community is still the organism most often expected or commissioned to deal with common challenges or opportunities.

3.3 Community Development

The Budapest Declaration of 2004, with contribution and approval of delegates from Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America captures the essence of this concept:

Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities, and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities, taken to mean both geographical communities, communities of interest or identity and

communities organising around specific themes or policy initiatives. It strengthens the capacity of people as active citizens through their community groups, organisations and networks; and the capacity of institutions and agencies ... to work in dialogue with citizens to shape and determine change in their communities. It plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities (Craig, 2007, p. 5).

Community development is evolving as an internationally recognized approach to dealing with a wide array of human and environmental challenges. Like community and poverty however, it is a concept that is much debated.

3.4 Community Based Collaborative Development

“Any successful anti poverty strategy must be rooted in and fully involve inner city residents and community based organizations” (Cummings, 2001). The vehicles most often used to improve conditions for impoverished populations are health and health care, education, housing, income security, food security, and social inclusion. Again the literature documents efforts, however well meaning, that fail to understand the need for bottom up approaches, and collaboration:

The root causes of poor health experienced by many who live in low income neighbourhoods-such as the lack of access to health care, limited food choices, and exposure to environmental hazards-are well documented, but go well beyond the scope of the health care delivery system. That is beginning to change as the comprehensive nature of poverty and the interconnectedness cause and effect becomes better known and understood. Both the public health and health care sectors and the community developers are interested in fostering viable and healthy communities. Low income disproportionately affects them, such as poor access to healthy food. As members of each sector learn more about the social determinants of health, they are struck by the overlap in their targets and goals, and they wonder why they did not form alliances with each other sooner (Braunstein & Lavizzo-Mourney, 2011, abstract).

It is claimed that the community development industry, a sector that gets access to significant resources often for bricks and mortar, rarely collaborates with the health sector or even considers health effects in its work (Erickson & Andrews, 2011). Loxley claims in his work on Linkages (Loxley, 2005) that the more you interact with the local community in terms of inputs and sales locally and with other sectors of the community the economy grows and more people are affected positively including the poor.

Education is seen as a very valuable tool in the fight against poverty, but often the expectations, particularly due to the lack of resources is too high:

The qualitative research findings suggest that it is vitally important for policy makers to acknowledge and value the challenges faced by teachers and staff who serve children whose families lack proper health care, affordable and quality early childhood education, nutrition, literacy, safety and livable wages (Gerstl-Pepin, 2006).

3.5 CED and Anti Poverty Approaches

The social economy is a much debated and not easily defined attempt to put forward initiatives to both set up a parallel structure and deal with the many shortcomings of the dominant neo-liberal economic model. From putting everything that isn't normal business practice and has some social dimension into a catch-all melting pot to simply blending business with some social activity like the triple bottom line or corporate social responsibility, the discussion is robust and plentiful. Approaches vary from the "micro finance" approaches of people like the Nobel peace

prize winner Mohammed Yunus (2009) to models with more local application. It is argued that safe vibrant neighbourhoods where there are partnerships between community development, education and health the well being of low income people is improved (Erickson & Andrew, 2010). Community capacity, or the opportunity for community to participate in decision making that affects community health, can reduce risk and improve equality (Freudenberg, 2011). Efforts at collaboration can be difficult and complicated and sometimes miss the poor completely (Virgil et al, 2010). Civic engagement is another approach that has not been fully tapped, however, as a strategy to reduce poverty it is limited unless it takes a more holistic tack and considers the real life experiences of those living in poverty (Gates, 2011). In asset 'strength based' approaches, however, the focus is too much on the internal strengths of the low income people themselves with the external threats and opportunities getting lost. There is little or no analysis of root causes and in particular the structures of power and oppression (Ennis & West, 2010).

Quebec adopted a broad inclusive definition in 1996 that incorporates all co-operative and mutual aid movements as well as areas of concern to associations (Voyer et al, 2006).

Depending on the case, the new social economy is relatively close to its historical components, since it shares with them the same major characteristics that distinguish it from private and public enterprise, namely:

- enterprises that are, first and foremost, groups of individuals before they are pools of capital;
- enterprises and organizations that are jointly owned by their users and/or employees;
- enterprises whose democratic function is governed by the legal status accorded as associations, co-operatives, or mutual benefit societies;

- enterprises in which the assets are jointly owned (inalienable surpluses, profits, and movements and who, generally, do not come from the business community (Favreau, 2006).

Each of these theories and their proponents have to decide, as Loxley (2007) infers, whether they are just one of a number of experiments and band aid solutions or part of a larger effort to change the fundamentals of justice and equity in our society. The issue being addressed today in the public square and in some literature is inequality. The case is made that inequality hurts everybody (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). In all of these worthy efforts to make change the critique continues to often be one of lack of inclusion, issues of power and control and unwillingness to collaborate and share best practices. These are made quite evident in the case studies where lack of coordination of services, lack of understanding amongst professionals and barriers, both personal and structural, got in the way of meeting a tremendous need (Campbell et al, 2011). In describing and researching three decades of different initiatives to deal with inner city poverty in Winnipeg, the authors of “Combating Poverty in Winnipeg Inner City, 1960s-1990s, Thirty Years of Hard Earned Lessons” describe a top down approach which did not promote citizenship engagement and underestimated the scale and complexity of inner city poverty (Silver and Toews, 2009).

There is a movement on the global front that suggests poverty can be reduced significantly, particularly in extremely impoverished areas of the world, by making money accessible to poor people in order to mobilize previously unrealized capital and encouraging the development of small businesses (Yunus et al, 2010). Although this approach is attracting a lot of attention and interest, there is a rising critique as the effects and results are being realized and assessed:

Microfinance may actually be undermining attempts to establish sustainable economic and social development...it has not unambiguously resulted in sustainable poverty reduction and economic development anywhere in the world. It is ideologically and politically close to the neoliberal/globalization model, which is problematic (Bateman and Chang, 2007, p3/4).

Yunus defines a social business as a business designed to meet a social goal. The approach is simple and very top down, moving from capitalism to micro credit to social business. He is critical however of the capitalist system where 94% of the worlds' income goes to 40% of the people and 6% goes to the remaining 60%. He asks why, in a world where the ideology of free enterprise has no real challenger have free markets failed so many people? His approach, however, is not designed to deal in a holistic manner with structural and causal issues:

I have found that some of my best projects have been started, not on the basis of rigorous prior analysis and planning but simply from an impulse that says, 'here is a chance to do something good' (Yunus et al, 2010, Prologue X1V/XV).

The literature indicates that the nature of CED itself and its various manifestations can often be insular and strangely uncooperative. Vested interest sometimes betrays the underpinning value system.

There is not an agreed upon definition for CED or what is often referred to as the Social Economy or how these two intersect:

What is needed is a clearer definition of the underlying economic principles as well as social attributes that distinguish social economy organizations from other types of organization. The absence of such a definition means "social economy" still has a very subjective and inexact meaning and one prone to misleading interpretations that are either too inclusive on one hand, or too restrictive on the other. For instance, while some would restrict social economy organizations only to not for profits others would include conventional private companies who contribute a portion of their profits to social ends (Restakis, 2006, p2).

Not knowing or understanding the true private and social cost of poverty to the economy also inhibits serious efforts to apply CED methods to new and creative approaches to the elimination of poverty. Many organizations, such as Food Banks Canada, Vibrant Communities and provinces are beginning to do the research and math. This information is stimulating action at the local level in many communities and in some provinces but has still not captured the attention and imagination of our federal government.

3.6 Getting Agreement on Structure, Collaboration and Governance

Two issues that presented in the literature as recurring difficulties in any kind of comprehensive attempt to link CED and poverty reduction were an architecture of silos and top down governance. Public Housing, Health Care, and Education are often presented as sectors with the potential to make a difference in combating poverty and to be organized as CED initiatives. The reality on the ground however, is that they operate separate from each other often driven by self interested bureaucracies that limit their effectiveness and potential. Also, important CED vehicles like Co-ops and Credit Unions can slip into an elitist top down model of governance that negates the important democratic community rooted value chain that should define and shape their response to poverty and hardship (Sizya, 2001).

3.7 Government

There is a universal suspicion of government and politics in the literature, based on its top down approaches to poverty reduction and eradication. Such approaches are typically seen as

politically driven, short term in nature, and under resourced (Billitteri, 2007). Some authors, however, caution that government should not be left off the hook as there are programs that do work and focussing on the individual is not the key to poverty elimination (Kiviat, 2012).

There is no lack of recommendations, and well researched and potentially effective plans to deal with poverty (Thomson, 1988). Often the most optimistic and well meaning government initiatives to prevent and solve a nations' poverty problem fails due to lack of leadership and political will (Billitteri, 2007). David Bradley, executive director of the United States National Community Action Foundation believes leadership is the main problem and that not solving poverty is not a values deficit but rather a resource deficit:

In terms of specific policy initiatives in the areas of sustaining employment, livable incomes and strong supportive communities, the Government Poverty Reduction Strategy (Ontario) fell short of the proposal advanced by the anti poverty movement (Maxwell, 2009, Preface).

A case study looking at "Poverty, social movements and community health: the campaign for the special diet allowance in Ontario" (Shantz, 2011) documents the political intransigence of successive governments who set other priorities.

There is not a lack of good ideas, research and recommendations to government. Often governments themselves develop and introduce strategies that attract wide spread support only to drop them or leave them incomplete because of the political election cycle, other priorities or expediency. If the political will and leadership was consistently there in support of CED there would be less economic deprivation and social inclusion.

3.8 Summary of the Literature

The discourse regarding the reduction and eradication of poverty has become politicized and polarized. There are some very real concerns and good ideas on both sides of the divide. The arguments around micro finance and social innovation are cases in point. The inordinate suspicion of the private sector by the left and the mistrust of government by the right is another example. It is time, considering we are dealing with the lives of our most at risk and marginalized citizens, to attempt to find some common ground. There are many initiatives that may be valid and may have the potential to make a difference. There is a role for the different levels of government and a centrally important place for local programs.

The potential for CED to be a central or driving force in these efforts to deal effectively with poverty has not been fully explored. Just as dealing with poverty is not universally seen as an economic issue, co-operative initiatives are too often viewed as social issues and therefore irrelevant to economic discussions. The research explored the role that the CED is playing and could play in creating a more stable and inclusive economy.

4. The Complex Faces of Poverty

Poverty has many, often interconnected, faces that make finding a simple solution very difficult.

The evolving nature of poverty which connects a growing population of the homeless, mostly

people with mental illness and a burgeoning demographic of working poor, working full time is but one indication of the complicated challenge of dealing with poverty:

The reality is there's lots of data that shows the lower your income, the greater the incidence of mental illness. There's a bit of a chicken-and-egg issue there: your income may be down because you had the mental illness, but the reality is that there is a very clear linkage between income and mental illness. The Canadian community health survey, the one done by StatsCan (Statistics Canada) shows very clearly that socio-economic status and mental illness have a very strong linkage (Hon. Michael Kirby, Mental Health Commission of Canada in Hoepfner, P41).

This is why there is much debate and differences of opinion over the best way to reduce or eradicate poverty. Certainly, income security and social exclusion rank at the top of a long list of issues to be dealt with:

The conceptualization and measurement of poverty is complex and continues to be a source of debate among poverty reduction advocates, social policy analysts and policy makers (Hoepfner, P9).

In the study undertaken by the Federal Government's Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities and tabled in the House of Commons in 2010 the scope and complexity of poverty became obvious. During the 47 meetings held, 270 individuals presented representing 203 organizations describing the plight and presenting solutions on behalf of people living in poverty across Canada. The list of groups at risk is long including aboriginal, immigrants, mental health sufferers, the disabled, women, single individuals, the working poor and children. That was why a comprehensive approach to a strategy was recommended that involves all levels of government, communities and community organizations working together:

Poverty is a complex, diverse and tough issue that requires a range of interventions by a number of actors-all three levels of government, employers, unions, educational and health institutions, NGOs and communities. Close cooperation between the federal and provincial/territorial government is particularly important (Caledon Institute of Social Policy in Hoepfner, P91).

Many of the stories told were clear indicators of the lack of understanding of this complexity and the limited effort by those who could make a difference to actually do anything. Just as poverty is complicated so must the response be comprehensive and inclusive. The high levels and the changing face indicate a failure and lack of understanding of the consequences.

Just as the issues and faces are complex so too must be the strategies to deal effectively with them. Government must give leadership and resources. CED with its ability to work co-operatively across sectors and looking at the very real examples in Quebec is positioned to play a central role. One of the big issues for Kimberly Rogers and others like her is isolation and lack of understanding and support. There is no place for her in the dominant economic system and the government has cut off her access. We have to find ways to accommodate based on their real life situation and the potential of those marginalized to participate.

The difficulties experienced by individuals and communities as expressed during the People's Parliament on Poverty to get even the limited supports available through government to work effectively to support those living in poverty is dramatic evidence of that failure. The Kimberly Rogers tragedy and the subsequent unwillingness of government to implement

recommendations from the inquest serve as a prime example. Kimberly Rogers simply wanted to get an education so that she could get a job. The student loan that made her a criminal was, after all, just a loan that she would be required to pay back after she graduated and became employed. She was described by a teacher as:

an ambitious student who was very thorough in her work and very supportive of others which made her extremely popular with her classmates ... she was an outstanding student who graduated near the top of her class of my ninety students last year, she was on par with the very best (Lyn Chetwind, communications teacher at Cambrian College in Sudbury, as quoted in Lacey, Northern Life newspaper, August 12, 2001).

It also supports the stories of failure of community to adequately support those living in poverty that usually framed the witness of hundreds of participants in The Peoples Parliament on Poverty.

Laurie McGauley wrote in a Letter to the Editor:

This treatment (Kimberly Rogers) is directly attributable to the Premier Mike Harris government's welfare policies, the justice system, local welfare administration, and all of us as a community (Sudbury Star, Aug 22, 2001).

There were many other stories that pointed to a culture of misunderstanding, indifference and neglect. Institutions, regulated by government, and set up to protect both workers and industry, such as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Ontario (WSIB) are often bastardized by those charged with insuring their proper use and functioning on behalf of all vested interests. A woman in Huntsville, who appeared before The People's Parliament on Poverty (2001), points to some of these inefficiencies and failures. She reveals her many years of pent up anger and frustration:

The cause of poverty for women is men - men who leave their wives for younger women; men who die and leave their wives nothing; men who have strokes and don't have the decency to die (2001).

Behind that expression of deep felt emotion, we learned, was a woman who got into a non-traditional trade and was hurt when a backhoe she was operating flipped and ran over her.

When she went to a doctor (perhaps male?) to see about a sore back she was told that she was just too fat and so did not qualify for Worker Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) benefits or any other form of disability assistance or help. This system, implemented by government through legislation, supported by workers and industry, to prevent injured workers from falling into a life of poverty, failed:

Now a gender base analysis of poverty would show that women are more likely to be poor. If they raise a family alone, their risk jumps. Other groups of women are disproportionately likely to experience poverty – unattached women under 65, women with disabilities, and racialized and Aboriginal women (Johanne Perron, New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity).

The way the legislation was originally intended to work is this: Employers contribute to a province wide insurance fund. Injured workers are compensated by the WSIB on a “No Fault” basis. This means that compensation is paid no matter who is at fault, the employer, the employee or someone else. In return for automatic compensation, the employer is shielded from any other liability. This means you cannot sue your employer for negligence if that negligence causes a work related injury or disease (United Food and Commercial Workers).

Much of the input received at the Federal Government Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disability were

recommendations of support for community effort and leadership with resources from government.

5. Findings

This research reveals that there is potential, with qualifications, for CED to be a catalyst in an effective strategy for poverty elimination. This was indicated in the focus groups, interviews and literature. It was particularly evident in both the literature and interview about CED in Quebec. There are other provincial jurisdictions in Canada where a concerted and coordinated approach has produced positive results like Manitoba and some of the Maritime Provinces. However, without leadership and resources from the Federal Government the efforts outside of Quebec, lack critical mass and sustained commitment.

Poverty and fighting poverty continues to be seen as a social issue and so economic approaches to address it tend to be marginal and experimental. The economic impact of poverty is not widely understood and so the potential for dealing with it in socio-economic ways is minimized. This became obvious in the archived materials where it was clear during the Peoples Parliament on Poverty hearings that because of the severe neo-liberal agenda of the provincial government, despite the evidence of increasing hardship for those most at risk there was no support for a different approach.

It is also important to note that, although there was much evidence and intervention from the CED community during the Federal Government hearings on poverty from 2008-2010 (archives), there was only one brief recommendation and reference in the tabled report (Hoeppner, 2010, pages 236-238). There was no serious effort at a socio economic analysis although there was a request made to the parliamentary budget officer, who claimed a lack of resources to carry out such a study. The Conservative members on the committee would not support the committee itself funding such an undertaking and then went on, in their minority report, to be critical that a costing was not done. This is ironic when you consider the findings of Food Banks Canada where the total economic cost of poverty in Canada (2007 Dollars) is estimated at between \$70 and \$90 billion, while Quebec, using CED approaches, creates (2002) 65,028 jobs and \$4.3 billion in revenues with non-profit adapted enterprises employing 4,000 people, 3,000 living with disabilities (Neamtan and Downing, 2005):

The office des personnes handicapées du Québec subsidizes jobs in these social economy enterprises to compensate for the lack of productivity of their disabled workers. Their study shows that Quebec gets back 7.7% more than it spends through taxes and savings on welfare payments (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, p11).

If this was extrapolated out to the rest of the country and leadership and resources were allocated to CED, the results could be dramatic. The literature suggests that wherever you see extraordinary effort to marry the social with the economic and get serious about CED the cyclical and polarized nature of government gets in the way. This is further complicated by a dominant economic system that depends on a certain level of unemployment and poverty. The

emergence in the last 15-20 years of a growing class of working poor (working full time year round) is a case in point (MISWAA Report, Stapleton, 2006).

5.1 Macro, National and Global

Globalization in the literature, focus groups and interviews was seen as creating serious difficulties for communities, families and the poor and marginalized. It was also spoke of, particularly since the financial collapse of 2008, as an agent of change, creating urgency and opportunity as we come to understand more directly the effect it is having on society and the environment. The Occupy Movement and many researchers and authors such as Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009, have raised in a very effective way the growing inequality caused by globalization. This inequality, obvious to some for quite some time, has inspired people like Muhammad Yunus to develop new and unique approaches to dealing with global poverty such as micro finance. This effort to use private sector vehicles and discipline to get small amounts of money into the hands of poor people to free up capital capacity is hotly contested and controversial. Other vehicles like Fair Trade have experienced both success and criticism. Fair Trade, a worthy and effective means of balancing the impact of globalization has become very popular and is sometimes used more as a marketing scheme “green washing” than an effective way of distributing the profits across the value chain. At issue is the influence of capitalism which has as its driving force the maximization of shareholder value to the expense of all other values. Some CED practitioners are working very hard to balance the interests by getting more of the wealth created into the hands of small local producers, thereby providing dignified work,

housing, education, and health care. These concepts are now playing themselves out in depleted and impoverished areas of North America and Canada. The interviews, focus groups and the literature all supported the concept that government must play a role if these and other initiatives to create more equality and fight poverty are to be effective. Again, enterprises in Quebec subsidized to employ people living with disabilities, as referenced later in this paper, are perfect examples of the positive impact of this kind of investment including the fact that all the money comes back through the taxes paid. Efforts by government such as President Johnson's War on Poverty, Britain's Big Society and President Obama's Office of Social Innovation are all less than perfect attempts to use CED principles to stimulate the economy affected by both the political shortcomings of democracy referenced earlier and the human tendencies of government, community and CED organizations to resist co-operation, build institutional silos and govern from the top down. This limits the potential for scalability and the larger impact that comes from people working together. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (Aristotle).

5.2 Micro, Local

Practical experience was brought to the discussion by social enterprise (their terminology) practitioners who started off by talking of the great social benefit of work whether part time or full time, paid or volunteer etc. They shared their experience managing social enterprises for primarily mental health survivors. Not everybody feels included in the workforce. The barriers to some people wanting to get in, such as government rules, can be very difficult. They spoke of

the need to be creative in raising capital by building partnerships using both traditional and non traditional players. Rise (established by Sandra Rotman in 2009) and the Canadian Association for Mental Health have put together a micro finance program for people struggling with mental health or addiction challenges. Causeway work centre in Ottawa has used these vehicles along with the services of Alterna Credit Union, the United Way and other revenue generators to run Krackers Catering (a small \$280,000 social enterprise) employing this population (Pawson, Focus Group, Ottawa, 2012). These are very good examples of efforts to bridge the ideological divides where, for example people who are often considered unable to work are encouraged to do so. They are also opportunities to apply different financing models that deliver a social good and yet meet the need of investors to get some return for their money by using vehicles like credit unions or social investment funds.

Finally, the collapse of the dominant neo-liberal financial system in 2008 was seen as an opportunity to imagine a new model with CED playing a significant role. Quebec saw this in the early 1980s:

The problem is that we have a model of development that creates poverty, that generates growing gaps between the rich and the poor and we said that in 1983 and everybody thought that we were crazy people. The OECD is saying that today (Neamtan, Interview, 2013).

After all, Canada has a history of responding to economic threat by acting cooperatively and building community (McMurtry, 2010). The fickle nature however of democracy (electoral cycles) and the ideological divide, driven by neo-liberalism, that infects the inner workings of

government is one of the biggest obstacles to developing this new model of development that leaves no-one behind. There is also the need to be realistic about what can be accomplished:

It is very dangerous to see the social economy as a part of the economy that will pick up the pieces that nobody wants to deal with, that we will just do social integration, and try to do all these miracles while you leave the traditional private sector doing business as usual and taking up all the lucrative sectors and leaving us the place where there is no money to make (Neamtan, Interview, 2013).

5.3 New Efforts at CED Definition

There was support for a role for CED in an effective strategy for poverty elimination with however some caveats and conditions. The lack of a clear definition of CED was noted but not seen as a deterrent to its further development as a vehicle or platform to deal with poverty. At the Ottawa focus group it was said that “simply integrating social values into business was not Community Economic Development” (Michael Toye, June 13, 2012).

In Quebec it is pretty basic and responds to the lived experience of the people:

But the basic, I guess, defining issue assigning linkage to what we call today the social economy, is that it was basically a citizens based movement within the economy to deal with issues which, at the time, were primarily issues of poverty and unemployment... Because the social economy responds to needs. And the needs can be jobs, but it can also be decent daycare, and proper housing. It also could be access to culture and a clean environment (Neamtan, Interview, 2013).

In a more academic vein in the literature there is a useful definition of the Social Economy:

Economic activity neither controlled directly by the state nor by the profit logic of the market; activity that prioritizes the social well being of communities and marginalized individuals over partisan political directives or individual gain (McMurtry, 2010).

These principles and definitions begin to get at the two biggest challenges to the further development of successful, sustainable CED. Conversation around these two approaches describes a lot of the dialogue in the research. John Anderson (Interview, June 14, 2012) weaves all of this into his understanding of what has happened over a number of years in CED. He describes the positive developments in Manitoba and Quebec both with and in spite of government support. He shares the experience in Saskatchewan; where at one time there was one hundred people working in government on co-op development there are now, under an extreme right wing government, only one and a half. There is a CED incubator in Winnipeg called SEED, developing enterprises to deal with low income and social exclusion. What is being suggested here is the need to take the negative aspects of government (primarily the political) out of the equation and to find ways around the almost religious adherence to maximizing shareholder profit in the private sector to produce a social good and return on investment that builds stable, safe and healthy communities.

5.4 Role for CED in a National Anti-Poverty strategy

The research showed that there is much happening on the CED front that is hopeful. Where it has been seen as a viable option or alternative much has been achieved that can be built on and adapted. Quebec is the most obvious example but it is not alone as people in different regions and sectors work to protect their livelihoods and communities. CED presents to many as a vehicle or platform for change consistent with Canada's historic response to threat. We are

not alone and this should give us confidence as we connect and learn from international initiatives and thinking:

CED is part of an international trend...that represents a pragmatic response to the economic and social challenges that globalization has created ... In Canada and abroad, more and more policy makers are becoming aware of the enormous potential of the social economy for redefining relations between the State, the market and civil society in the context of new 21st century realities (Neamtan and Downing, 2005, p6).

The research indicates that there are many small social enterprises operating successfully in communities that make a contribution to reducing poverty.

One of the issues that came up in the focus groups and interviews was the financial collapse of 2008 and the opportunity that exists now to put forward a new economic model. There was some discussion in the focus groups and in interviews, supported by the literature review, that Canada has historically responded to threat by acting communally and developing new co-operative vehicles. There were also many examples shared, like Pathways to Education (Anne Jamieson, Focus Group, 2012), Krackers Catering (Doug Pawson, Focus Group, 2012) Youth Empowering Parents (Michael Shapcott, Focus Group, 2012), of smaller, more current effective CED approaches to difficulties in particular populations or neighbourhoods. There are also examples of larger efforts driven by government, Like President Johnson's Great Society (Billitteri, 2007) (using government vehicles), President Obama's New Initiative Fund (using faith groups and other charitable organizations), Britain's Big Society (using the private sector), and organized labour's Quebec Solidarity Fund and interconnected networks like Quebec's Chantier De L'Economie Sociale, to create larger scale change with some success and some failure.

In Canada, Prime Minister Martin, through the Ministry of Social Development in 2003 and the budget of 2004, introduced a new Social Economy Initiative. Most of the people attending the focus groups and interviewed were affected and motivated by this brief period of actual leadership and investment. This initiative was lost however, except in Quebec, with the short lived Martin government.

The research participants were positive about the role CED could play in a national strategy to eradicate poverty. They saw a significant role for government leading and brokering cooperation and providing the resources necessary to scale up the social economy that would ultimately be recouped. There were concerns expressed however about scalability:

Personally, I think CED has huge, huge potential, but probably requires substantial support from Provincial and Federal levels of government. I do worry about the scalability of the activity. And it's great that we have Causeway and other ventures happening in the country, and perhaps Manitoba has got some robust stuff going on, but, you know the scalability, I think is a real concern (Rob Rainer, Focus Group, 2012).

And I think in Manitoba in general, where CED is actually well established, there is a combination of factors that has allowed it to grow into the kind of catalytic, cohesive, movement building approach over a series of years. The question is how do you articulate it, and how do you apply it in a way that's both feasible and meaningful to a broader audience (Michael Toye, Focus Group, 2012).

Kevin Dorse from Credit Union Central saw social finance and micro credit as powerful instruments to improve the lot of otherwise at risk or on low income people. He shared the story of a woman in Ottawa who is a tailor or seamstress. She doesn't have access to conventional financing so:

She was able to get a micro finance loan at a reasonable rate of interest to start a small tailor shop here on Bank Street. You know, great example of a success, you know,

otherwise what would she have done? This gives her the opportunity to get some funding that she couldn't have gotten from the bank, couldn't have gotten from any other means and put her idea to work, and turned it into a success (Kevin Dorse, June, 13, 2012).

Michael Shapcott from the Wellesley Institute in Toronto, while cautioning that cash transfers to poor families from government are fundamental to any effective anti-poverty strategy, was very positive about CED as part of a larger more comprehensive approach:

There's such a rich history in Canada. Whether it's Moses Coady and the Co-operative movement, there's such an amazing amount of positive history in Canada, and internationally about how people are organizing around new, or old structures that are being renewed, around CED. So I think there is a huge amount of area to be done. Here at Wellesley, we've been sponsoring a project called "You for Change" which is engaging newcomer or homeless youth in education, employment, and training. And CED, social enterprises, that kind of stuff, is a key part of the program. And it is laying down a foundation which is going to stay with these kids for their entire life. It is terrific stuff (Michael Shapcott, June 19, 2012).

5.5 Limitations of CED

There are many challenges, recognized in the literature and spoken of in the focus groups and interviews, which, in the present circumstance, limit the potential for CED to be an effective strategy for poverty elimination.

It was noted in the focus groups that neither CED nor community should be seen as a panacea given the complexity of poverty and the many challenges facing those living in deprived circumstances or experiencing social exclusion. It should rather be practical and thoughtful recognizing both the potential and the challenges. A strong case was made that CED be seen as only part of a larger strategy that recognizes that many just cannot or will never fit comfortably

into the workforce. An emphasis and understanding will need to be built around the need for a mix of social, economic and government programs and different ways of organizing. There was some discussion as well around how we define and value work and the right to opt out of the paid workforce.

CCEDNet contributed to the discussion by indicating how pleased they were to be invited to speak about CED and its potential at a time when there is little momentum nationally with the exception of John Loxley's work in Manitoba. They spoke of the need for a catalytic cohesive movement driven approach with solid values. The challenge lies in its articulation as feasible and meaningful to a broader audience. Jack Quarter was cited by a focus group participant as saying that it cannot be done without government and that even though from time to time the Federal government did participate, the provinces were in the best position to take a lead. They first raised the issue of CED not being a panacea to deal with poverty coming from discussions they had with other practitioners. It requires certain conditions, coordination and support from government, otherwise it will be fragmented. It is not enough to simply integrate social values into business as this is not CED.

5.5 Scalability

A concern raised in the Ottawa focus group was scalability. How can CED be dramatically scaled up? Rob Rainer questioned the potential for CED to be an answer when the number of people living in poverty is so overwhelming.

Kevin Dorse presented an interesting perspective, which shouldn't surprise given the success and effectiveness of the credit union movement across the country and in fact around the world. Credit Unions see CED using economic levers to move things in the direction we want to go. The Credit Union is a community oriented money management system that puts surplus back into the community. Two vehicles presently in use would fall into the CED category. Social Finance takes capital and directs it exclusively to firms and charities motivated by a social mission. Doing that which would not get done otherwise. Micro Finance is lending to low income people on social assistance. the phenomenon promoted by Muhammad Unus (2007) on a global scale that lends money at low interest to people with an idea who would not be able to access capital otherwise.

Scalability on a number of fronts is a big challenge in CED. Examples like the worker takeover of Algoma Steel (Broad and Savory Gordon, 2006) in the early 90s are few, and its reversal a few years later under the pressure to access capital for technological upgrades demonstrates the effort required and ultimately the weakness of the support infrastructure or architecture to make this a more frequent and sustainable option. This model supported by government, financial institutions, organized labour and community could be a very effective alternative to one industry towns impacted by the shifting priorities of global capital. In the early 90s with leadership by government (New Democrat) and the labour movement (United Steelworkers of America, USWA and the Canadian Energy and Paperworkers, CEP) four large industries in three Northern Ontario communities (Sault Ste Marie, Kapuskasing, Thunder Bay) in a difficult global recession were successfully restructured using this CED model. This approach which protects

communities, good paying jobs and families has been used by the USWA in a number of communities across the United States. In 2009 the USWA signed a memorandum of agreement with Mondragon (the world's largest worker owned co-operative based in Northern Spain). It establishes a framework agreement for collaboration in establishing Mondragon co-operatives in the manufacturing sector within the United States and Canada. Workers and communities deserve a fighting chance to keep local industries alive through worker-ownership where companies are otherwise bankrupted, off shored or made redundant through poor government policy (ie: unfair trade). In one of the interviews it was pointed out that there were two strains of CED focussed on economic growth and jobs. One was small, marginal often self employed, precarious and low income. The other is bigger and more economically viable like Mondragon and Credit Unions. They both need much more public support if they are to be scaled up enough to become a viable sector of the economy. He also suggested we need a national CED network such as CCEDNET to create awareness. Capitalization of an innovation strategy could be addressed if an instrument such as a Tobin Tax was introduced with proceeds directed to the provincial and local (Murray McAdam, June 20, 2012):

With CED's focus on job creation, economic growth, it should be possible to appeal to at least some more conservative minded people around this. But I think one of the challenges, there's been two streams within CED. One is that a lot of the enterprises have been pretty, if you will marginal. Like helping people to start small, self employment businesses, and sometimes some small community enterprises that, while having value, people end up often not earning that much money. It's precarious. So there's that model versus the more, if you will, economically-viable businesses that are more large scale, and that you see on an international scale, say with Mondragon in Spain where, you know, these are really big companies, in some ways part of the regular economy. And so to me, there would be kind of two crucial factors around them making CED, you know, going from a fairly small and more marginal part of the economy to being mainstream. One would be, obviously, much more public support in a range of ways. And especially support through some of the players that could provide the

needed funding like the Credit Union movement. You need greater awareness of this as a new way of economic development. Then you need to provide the actual funding (MacAdam, June 20, 2112).

In the research, scalability was first raised by CWP (Focus group, June 13, 2012) as they have been calling for a national poverty elimination strategy in a campaign (Dignity for All) they co lead with CPJ. They point to national programs like the Canada Pension Plan, the Canada Health Act, Employment Insurance and the Child Tax Benefit as examples of successful government supported initiatives with different funding models.

5.6 Charity vs. Development Model

Reliance on a charity model of support or approach to dealing with societal inefficiencies such as poverty was raised as a significant issue in the Ottawa focus group. It was perceived as a stop gap or band aid for the problem and not dealing with underlying systemic issues of justice and human rights. It was also seen as unsustainable with many examples of well meaning, often church driven, initiatives disappearing over time or under the weight of the challenge. There was also reference to a low multiplier effect as good jobs are not necessarily created and there is minimal new wealth generated. Joe Gunn, (Focus Group, 2012) reflected on the fact that many charity centered organizations from the 1960s and 1970s had disappeared and felt that if they had moved to a more development model, where people and communities are empowered, they might have been more sustainable and helpful.

There is a need to move large organizations like churches out of the charity model in order to build that critical mass that could deal with the scalability issue. Churches or faith organizations could be used effectively in a larger strategy to communicate and to mobilize for justice. They could be very good partners in the quest for the common good in a world driven by the narcissistic values of greed and fear. Or be helpful, as Billy Bragg was heard to say on Q with Jian Gomehi, in the battle against cynicism and apathy. They could be, as is happening in the inner neighbourhoods of many American cities, system navigators for the at risk and marginalized. In an effective CED approach new roles will have to be imagined for everybody.

5.7 Government Role

Given the make up of the focus groups, the orientation of the interviewees and the consistent reference in the literature, government was seen as an important player or partner. There was support for the already existing role of government in combating poverty and enthusiasm for a new and evolving role where CED and poverty were concerned. Many examples of both failed and successful initiatives were shared. Government was seen as needing to give leadership, provide resources and support research, education and training.

There were many expressions of caution against dismantling the social safety net and other important national support programs such as a national affordable housing plan or a national child care program or supports for the disabled and those living with mental health challenges.

It was strongly suggested that these expressions of citizenship like the Canada Health Act, The Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance need to be reviewed and renewed to reflect today's demographic reality. These national programs were put in place with a commitment to universal accessibility using a government funded not for profit delivery mechanism. It was felt that in dealing effectively with poverty, a CED approach could meld these principles and values with some of the more socially responsible features of the private sector. The present Canadian Federal government on the other hand doesn't see CED as a complimentary piece to the private sector. Large corporations will not solve all our problems and will not hire all our people:

Whether it is the Canadian story or international, the core of a poverty reduction or elimination strategy still has to be income transfer or benefits. Good old fashion stuff... however there is such a rich history in Canada, whether it is Moses Cody or the Co-operative movement, there is such an amazing amount of positive history in Canada and internationally about how people are organizing around new or old structures that are being renewed around CED....The first trap to avoid is the trap of saying we can jump on CED, and then governments no longer have to do any of the stuff, just like government often will try and download to charities and say this is what churches and faith communities do, let them deal with the relief of poverty (Michael Shapcott, Wellesley Institute in Focus group, Toronto, June 19, 2012).

The literature review and the qualitative data both indicate that there are good models and practical applications of CED that have been tried and have been found successful. The volatility of government and the intransigence or narrow focus of some CED organizations present as two of the more formidable obstacles to moving forward. There are some authors and academics like Quarter, Loxley and McMurtry who are beginning to connect the dots and articulate the important commonalities on the various sides in this debate. Neamtan and Downing (2005) do a very good job, in anticipation at that time of a major push by the Federal

Government towards a national CED initiative, of telling the story, dealing with definitions and building consensus:

The social economy represents a pragmatic response to the economic and social challenges that globalization has created...In Canada and abroad, more and more policy makers are becoming aware of the enormous potential of the social economy for redefining relations between the State, the market and civil society in the context of new, 21st realities (Neamtan, Downing, 2005, p6).

In the interview with Nancy Neamtan she spoke of poverty in that context, “It is dangerous to see the social economy as only dealing with poverty” (Neamtan, President Chantier De L’Economie Sociale, Feb. 8, 2013):

So solving poverty, as people have mentioned, is a national issue. The Federal government has to be involved if it’s going to work. It’s also really important, I think, especially for the Federal government to recognize that people who are already marginalized have to be involved and that poverty has to be seen, as most European countries see it, in the context of larger social and economic objectives, not something on its own (Sheila Regehr, National Council of Welfare, 2010).

Government and Public Policy are often not aligned to support such an effort, while at other times there is not the political will.

Government support through leadership, legislation and resources was called for very clearly in the work done at the federal government level in the report (Hoepfner, 2010) and legislation (C-545) tabled in 2010. The substantial consultation carried out in support of this work heard consistently the call for government at all levels to work together. The federal government was often targeted for its absence and evident lack of interest in a national anti poverty strategy. In this research, provincial and territorial governments were often lauded for their efforts but even the provincial and territorial leaders spoke of the limitations experienced because the federal government was not at the table.

Canada Without Poverty (CWP), previously known as the National Anti Poverty Organization (NAPO), with headquarters in Ottawa, sees CED as an important vehicle for transformation and a platform for political change as we consider the challenges of those living in poverty:

It will not be an easy bicycle to ride as we prioritize listening to the voice of the people and work to ensure that the benefits also accrue to the people. Managing business and government involvement will be tricky (McLaughlin, Focus Group, 2012).

All levels of government and other institutions are seen to have a role to play and it is not an either/or. It should focus on the local and be rooted in values. With the support of government and each playing its appropriate role, CED has huge potential as a policy tool where government provides the regulatory and financial support necessary for citizen owned and controlled community enterprises.

5.8 Challenges to Implementation

The inability or unwillingness of government, however to do long term planning or to think beyond the political cycle is another huge obstacle to applying CED principles and approaches to poverty elimination strategies. This comes up in the literature as programs such as US President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" losing momentum with a new President (Billitteri, 2007) or when Prime Minister Paul Martin's commitment in 2004 to CED falls off the table after the election of a new Prime Minister. There is a political ideological divide that is difficult to bridge. Efforts to find common ground in the work to craft a national poverty

reduction plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada (Hoepfner, 2010)

produced limited results while articulating the problem:

In budget 2004 the federal government committed funding (\$132 million over several years), to be delivered through regional development agencies and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, to support capacity building, financing and research in the social economy. On September 25, 2006, the federal government announced that approximately 439.3 million of non-committed funding for the social economy program would be eliminated, part of an initiative in Budget 2006 to identify \$1 billion in savings from programs and activities (Hoepfner, p237).

Lack of momentum and interest by the present Federal government in giving leadership or providing resources to national programs was a recurring theme in the focus groups.

Caution was counselled to not see CED as a simple solution for an often complicated and difficult public challenge. Much input indicated that the social safety net with direct cash transfers to people living in poverty continues to be central to any improvements in their lives. “Give people more money and they do better.” It was pointed out that Britain’s “Big Society” experiment has been found to be a failure in reducing poverty while Brazil with its reliance on a centrally significant cash transfer has been significantly more successful (Shapcott, Focus Group, 2012).

It is not enough to have just economic development. An example of a flawed approach could be the new Conservative Government’s Social Impact Bonds, presented as a panacea with enticing elements, similar to the Private Public Partnership approach used by some provincial governments to build public infrastructure. Chandra Pasma, in the Ottawa focus group, stated that the “devil was in the detail” while speaking of such programs introduced as one thing but

turning out to be something altogether different in their application. Another question left hanging was how to deal with problems not easily solved by the economy.

5.9 Quebec

Quebec presents as the brightest light and sign of hope for CED at its best in that jurisdiction and in the rest of Canada. CED in Quebec has arrived through tremendous effort, commitment and investment by practitioners, academics, community, labour organizations and government. It is an example of public policy so rooted in the culture and lived experience of the people that it becomes difficult if not impossible for governments of different ideologies to shut it down or make fundamental changes to it. The literature, focus groups, and interviews, particularly the interview with Nancy Neamtan, President of the Chantier De L'Economie Sociale and author, (Neamtan and Downing, 2005) gives shape and substance to hopes for the further development of CED as another model of economic development that will address in a serious way the issue of poverty. The warning, to “not see the Social Economy as only dealing with poverty” (Neamtan, Feb 8, 2013) is important. In Quebec CED is seen, felt and experienced as the Social Economy, a viable and robust third sector. Its evolution reflects very directly why it has become a significant element of the history and culture of the province. It defines in an important way the distinct personality and character of the Francophone experience of the Social Economy in Canada (Vaillancourt, 2010). It evolved in the 1980s, out of the poorer neighbourhoods of Montreal where there was a second generation of poverty caused by the demise of the older manufacturing sector. This was the beginning of welfare programs, short term employment and

little money. The Women's March Against Poverty in 1994-95 was seminal as they demanded money for the social economy, and much of the terminology was coined by the women's movement. Premier Bouchard convened a summit in 1996. A pre-summit consultation and preparation went on for six months and resulted in the establishment and recognition of three economic sectors including the social economy. The vision of the social economy was not limited to taking care of poverty rather it stood in stark contrast to a system of development that created poverty. This was a cultural shift; welfare to real jobs, CED versus Reagan's trickledown economics. A citizen based movement was organized to deal with issues of poverty. The first CED corporation was established in 1983 (Neamtan and Downing, 2005), the Solidarity Fund developed by the labour movement which today holds \$8 billion. It started lending to social enterprises that were financially viable and socially profitable resulting in the revitalization of Southwest Montreal, attracting manufacturing into the area and impacting positively on community. The Quebec vision rooted in the needs and aspirations of the community resulted in a priority on child care, housing and access to culture. Pauline Marois, Minister responsible for the implementation of the provincial child care and early learning program insisted on it being universally accessible and not for profit (Neamtan, Feb. 8, 2013).

The Social Economy in Quebec, in all the research, gets referenced as a successful model worth looking at with several pieces that could be extrapolated across the country. Such an initiative will require Federal government leadership such as is seen in Quebec where the partners are now working on a comprehensive legislative framework that involves multiple ministries. This parallels the approach taken in the recommendations contained in the Federal Poverty

Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada (Hoeppner, 2010). In Quebec there is a recognition that this strategy and architecture needs to support both territorial and sectoral approaches and initiatives. There are vehicles already in place that are already working or could be adapted to deliver CED programs, such as the Federal Regional Development Agencies. These agencies, like Canada Economic Quebec and the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern and Rural Ontario, were to be the delivery agents for initiatives announced in the 2004 Federal budget. Unfortunately, all financial support, except in Quebec, was eliminated by the new government elected in 2006 (Hoeppner, 2010, p237). Quebec, with these resources and rooted in its culture and history, continued to develop this Social Economy sector and so has become a very practical experience from which the rest of Canada can learn.

6. Conclusions

The research suggests a number of actions that need to be taken.

6.1 Take back the agenda

There is a very real appetite for change and renewal in the world today. People aren't happy with what happened to financial markets in 2008 and even less pleased with what they are being asked to do to recover or correct the situation. There is a movement happening that needs to be engaged. This is manifesting itself globally, first in the 'Arab Spring', then with the Occupy Movement, followed by countries in Europe and our own Canadian "Casseroles" in

Quebec and Idle No More which engaged people across the country. The constant criticism of these citizen led movements is that they don't know what they want or that they are disorganized and lack leadership. The common themes emerging from these movements, however, are a) a very real anger towards the inequalities produced by the dominant neoliberal economic model and b) a demand for change. This inequality is the kind of threat experienced by Canada before and the constant lived experience of the people of Quebec and the First Nations. CCEDNET and the Chantier de L'Economie Sociale with the other Provincial Social Economy Round Tables need to work together to engage the Canadian public in a conversation about a different development model more in keeping with our values and traditions. There is a vacuum right now that the "1%" is working feverishly to fill. There is an opportunity and a movement already underway. Does the CED universe have the courage to marshal its resources and lead the charge in building a Canada that leaves no one behind? This was happening in 2004 but a right wing government put it on hold everywhere except in Quebec. The ashes are not out. This becomes very political and requires action at both the local provincial/territorial and national level to take back the agenda. The CED community has to engage.

6.2 Adopt a definition

There are many definitions of CED or the Social Economy floating around, particularly in the academic world. In the interest of clarity and to attract the attention of the general public in a manner that inspires confidence and support, there needs to be a more definite articulation of what this new agenda is about and proposes to do. Some common language, experience and

aspiration is captured in the definition put forth in Living Economics: “Economic activity neither controlled by the state nor by the profit logic of the market; activity that prioritizes the social well being of communities and marginalized individuals over partisan political directives or individual gain” (McMurtry, 2010, p31). This captures most readily the main question of this research which is to determine what role can or should Community Economic Development play in an effective strategy for poverty elimination. Companion to this could be the guiding principles designed by John Loxley and the Manitoba Research Alliance which could be applied in other jurisdictions:

1. Use of locally produced goods and services;
2. Production of goods and services for local use;
3. Local reinvestment of profits;
4. Long term employment of local residents;
5. Local skill development;
6. Local decision making;
7. Promotion of public health;
8. Improvement of the physical environment;
9. Promotion of neighbourhood stability;
10. Promotion of human dignity; and
11. Mutual aid support among organizations adhering to these principles

(Loxley and MacKinnon, 2003).

6.3 Scale it up

This needs to be a big enough initiative that it captures the imagination of a cross section of people from community leaders to economic development and financial professionals and the public at large. It also needs to be capable of providing for, in a substantial way, the millions of people living in poverty today. The Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement are good examples of the vision, courage and ingenuity required to establish a national plan of action to address poverty and demonstrate that it can be done.

These public institutions have weathered the test of time and governments of different political persuasion. The way the Quebec Social Economy has scaled up to now represent over 2% of GNP is an indication of the potential when vehicles like government, union sponsored solidarity funds, a committed large credit union levers further investment from the private sector. The Algoma Steel restructuring in the early 1990s in Sault Ste Marie in Northern Ontario is another excellent example of how CED can be used to save a large mill, thousands of jobs and a community (Broad and Savory Gordon, 2006). A sympathetic government aligned with organized labour, management, a chartered bank and the community orchestrated a worker buy out. It was the largest of its kind in North America and the world. The Mondragon Co-op in Northern Spain is another excellent example of developing an economy that works for people and a region.

6.4 Co-operation between Regions, Sectors and Local Initiatives

Too often, CED initiatives work in silos or in isolation from each other. This reduces the overall impact of projects targeted at challenged or impoverished neighbourhoods and is not in keeping with the expressed and written principles of CED. This can sometimes be driven by private enterprise partners or government more interested in productivity and efficiency than actually engaging those affected and providing services that work. This neo-liberal ideology which mistrusts government, wants to reduce taxes, particularly for large corporations, and doesn't believe in building community is anathema to any success in CED. It also led us to the crash of 2008 and is at the root of the unease in today's society. CED needs to be confident that it is a viable alternative, build on its success and enter into partnerships from a position of strength. Although the work has to be done locally and often in smaller pieces that may seem disjointed, real connections to the larger purpose and cause through funding vehicles, think tanks and shared personnel is essential. Efforts that encourage working together, engaging diverse constituencies, and involving people in governance and oversight are far more successful and have greater potential for long term sustainability.

6.5 Challenge the larger more successful CED (Credit Unions and Co-ops for example) entities to remember their roots

It becomes a multi dimensional problem when large and successful CED enterprises forget where they started. Most Credit Unions, for example, started around somebody's kitchen table and yet some today act as if they are just another chartered bank. This sends a wrong message and reduces the capacity for scalability as people and institutions make choices about where

they will invest their time and money. These larger enterprises and their success are critical to growth and further development in the sector. They need to lead the way in corporate responsibility, act as a catalyst and facilitator in furthering the cause, and seed new emerging projects. Credit Union Central Canada and many of the larger credit unions as seen in the research do live up to this expectation. It was said in one focus group that when these entities are rooted in their community through democratic governance structures that are real and meaningful some amazing partnerships and community initiatives ensue.

6.5 Implement a Legislative Framework at the Federal government level

Throughout the focus groups, interviews, archived material and literature there is a constant and consistent call for the Federal government to engage, give leadership and provide resources. This was seen particularly throughout the consultation and in the tabled report (Hoepfner, 2010). Legislation tabled (C-545, 2010) flowing from this work and report could act as a helpful framework or be adapted to answer the second research question: How can government policy support a Community Economic Development strategy to reduce and eradicate poverty in Canada? There is a strong focus on the poverty legislation already adopted in Quebec. It calls for co-operation between Federal, Provincial Territorial, First Nation governments and with civil society organizations. It is not prescriptive so leaves room for creativity and different expressions and cultural traditions. An interministerial working group would be mandated, given timelines and be held accountable. Resources would be allocated. It

is also helpful that Quebec is presently working on a legislative framework that will break new ground in Canada and set a precedent.

7. Summary

Poverty is a persisting and pervasive reality in the lives of too many families and people in this wealthy country. It is often exacerbated by public policy imposed by governments sometimes well intentioned but often damaging and unhelpful. There is significant debate around best practices and effective approaches. This conversation has become polarized, politicized, and divisive. There is no lack of ideas and often very comprehensive frameworks to deal with this stubborn issue. It sometimes looks like the only thing missing is leadership, political will, and resources. It is never that simple and is often influenced by forces outside and bigger than community and individual governments, such as globalization and a religious adherence to neo-liberal economic practices. There have been efforts, as outlined in the literature, to defend local economies and communities against the more damaging elements of industry, business and trade since the Industrial Revolution. New models of economic development, some driven by national governments, have been tried with some success in different parts of the world. The impact of a dominant global, neo-liberal, capitalist, free trade ideology has permeated almost all aspects of public life until the crash of the financial system in 2008. Many attempts to further a CED model of development until then was seen as marginal at best and not given much support or capacity to grow. The resultant growth in poverty and the failure of community has led many to revisit and rethink an approach that has actually been a natural

pattern of response to economic threat in Canada throughout its history. Different parts and populations in Canada based on the character and personality of the threat and the strengths and weaknesses of their communities responded in different ways. Many of the challenges are driven by political, economic, social and religious systems taken over by a right wing ideology that is both driving an agenda and attacking anything that gets in its way. That is why Quebec is such a fascinating and informative jurisdiction to look at and learn from. Quebec has lived under threat for all of its existence and has consistently fought back against economic dominance by an Anglo minority, oppression by the church and more recently assimilation by the rest of Canada. The Quebec vision over the last few years has been very practically rooted in the needs and aspirations of the people demanding child care, affordable housing, jobs and access to culture. It began to create jobs and has become more inclusive and is now challenging the dominant economic development model. Nancy Neamtan, in an interview (2013-04-08), speaks of the need to be able to make a good economic argument about sustainability so that labour, government and solidarity funds can lever private sector investment. She spoke of the work of the Canadian Task Force on Social Finance, chaired by Stanley Hartt and including former Prime Minister Paul Martin, on which she sits as a member, as an example of the interest in and potential for a new and different approach to development approach that could challenge or compete with the dominant economic model that has failed us so dramatically. The numbers referenced earlier in this paper reflecting the growing and substantial contribution of the social economy to the overall economy of Quebec is impressive and gives rise to this significant interest.

This research looked at the potential for CED, supported by government in some part, to bridge the divide and present a realizable strategy that will reduce and eradicate poverty. This was done looking at Canada's history of collective action in response to threat and the already existing examples and traditions in Quebec. A significant amount of valuable information already exists and just waits to be mined and used. The impact on the poor themselves of governments non action or introducing bad policy or conversely actually getting serious about this challenge was central to this study. Kimberly Rogers' death serves as a very important critique of how ideology can lead to poor public policy with tragic consequences.. Knowledge of and about CED practices in Canada and internationally informed this conversation and work as did the intelligence of public policy and poverty practitioners and activists. The challenges raised such as political will and leadership, definition and co-operation between the different approaches and players in CED, adherence to a charity model of development and scalability are all met with corresponding examples of possibility. The moment we are in, with movements like Occupy and Idle No More making a case for something different focussed primarily on the needs of those most at risk and marginalized is full of promise. The literature, the research and lived experience of the poor shows us that it can and needs to be done.

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