

2006 National Conference on CED and the Social Economy Report on Policy Discussions

There were 7 structured opportunities for dialogue on policy issues preceding and during the conference: the Policy Renewal Forum, the Canadian Women's CED Council Policy Forum, the four sessions in the Policy stream of workshops, and the Policy Plenary. This report highlights the main themes of each one, and reproduces some texts offered to participants at the conference.

1. Policy Framework Renewal Meeting

Tuesday March 14, 6:30pm – 9:00pm, and Wednesday March 15, 8:00am – 11:30am

The conference program described this session as follows: The original Canadian CED Network Policy Framework, written in 2001, focused on the integration of human, social and economic capital. This unifying perspective on policy effectively led membership activities at the local, provincial, and national level and guided Board and committee decisions on national CED issues such as HRSDC and the social economy. As a national network, we need agreement on the principles and policies that guide our work and advocacy. To ensure the continuation of Canadian CED Network's leadership and role in public policy, the Policy Council has begun a process of renewal of the Canadian CED Network Policy Framework. What needs updating and refining? What needs to be added? What are broader global trends that will impact our communities in the coming years and what are the resulting policy implications? And how do we most effectively get our message across to those in our communities and to those in government? To answer these questions, the Policy Council invites all Canadian CED Network members to be part of this participatory and interactive renewal process.

Approximately 65 people participated in this session.

Notes –

a) Reaffirm:

- many of the same messages
- capacity-building , especially for new people, institutions, youth and others
- creating a more favourable legislative and regulatory framework
- strengthening of networks
- access to a wider range of government programs

b) Emphasize:

- an inclusive approach to social, cultural, natural and economic elements
- on social enterprise development
- on leadership development

c) Gaps to be filled:

- include all levels of government, access to government procurement opportunities, strengthening the social economy as a priority
- an overall principle-based vision statement is needed

- refer in the examples to more issues such as housing, the environment, child care food security and sustainable livelihoods
- stress collaboration with (new) partners, within and beyond the local area
- aim for more recognition of the role of CED and the social economy as an important development instrument
- restate emphasis upon transfer of experience and knowledge sharing (e.g. stories, models and lessons, etc)
- restate need for lifelong learning and sustainable livelihoods
- stress local control of resources and the need to invest in CED institutions
- move away from dependence on governments and highlight greater self-reliance, as well as building entrepreneurial organizations (i.e. locally controlled, etc)

d) Suggested changes/adaptations

- focus on a stronger marketing message
- reflect the changed context from five years ago
- refer to a wider range of issues concerning community-based groups
- adjust to new terminology (e.g. food sustainability in place of food security, good jobs versus life long learning, etc)
- reference the demand side such as working with employers to meet their needs

e) Adjust the messaging

- clarify and simplify the language
- identify the target audience(s) such as the three levels of government, as well as building a more common understanding
- frame the recommendations in broader, principle-based terms
- use more visionary language (e.g. democratization of the economy, etc)
- make more reference to successes, accomplishments and what has been done
- shape the tone into a more positive messaging
- mention volume of activity and impacts
- stress the marketing and promotion aspects at within and external to the sector
- place greater focus on the long term
- highlight some celebration

Summary of Key Points

1. VISION – the policy needs to be vision-driven
 - important to develop a strong common vision (statement)
 - it needs an assertion of principles
 - get it right in the message
 - then work on the strategies (later)
2. CONTEXT
 - update it
 - reflect the changed reality
 - note the results/impacts
3. REFLECT – a broader reach
 - new audiences (e.g. municipal) & policy arenas

- adopt an equitable and inclusive style and content
 - place emphasis upon collaboration & “concertation”
 - go beyond place-based CED
 - recognize the regional, national and global pressures and issues
4. OPPORTUNITY
- take advantage of this policy renewal opportunity to move to a higher level of discourse using a strong principle-driven vision statement, clear messaging and clear audience targeting
5. RECOGNITION
- develop greater recognition of CED and the social economy sector as full partners to be engaged in the full range of policy discourse, as a valued player bringing value-added to the discussions.

Additional Notes

- CCEDNet believes that every Canadian has the right to live in and contribute to building a strong and healthy community. CED is a value because it is an integrated and inclusive approach and provides this opportunity. CED creates Community, Efficacy, and Dignity. Strengthening the social economy is critical because it builds the opportunities and conditions that create community capital, which is a combination of social, economic, human, cultural, and natural capital.
- CCEDNet’s role is to:
 - o Create an enabling policy environment at all levels of government
 - o Support partnerships and networks of place and interest
 - o Improve member/sector access to tools and resources
 - o Identify and participate in effecting key issues and campaigns that impact communities
- There are different typologies of policy: Territorial, Sectoral, Population, Generic, and International. Need to be conscious of this when designing policy and be clear on which typology you are aiming for.
- CCEDNet needs to clearly articulate the values and ideological framework behind (its version of) CED. It is the “why” behind our cause/movement. Some are focused on economics, others on community, what is CCEDNet’s vision? Also, articulate the context we work within: globalization, corporatization, and privatization. However, recognize that our goal is real outcomes for real people in local communities, but on a national scale. We probably need to give a definition of social economy, and explain how we see the connection and where they fit with each other.
- Values, vision, context, and policy all have to be articulated in simple language, allowing for tailored presentation to various audiences.
- CCEDNet needs to be ready to move and be active on timely issues that are relevant to the sector or to the communities that the sector works to support. Examples include: affordable housing, daycare, credentialing for immigrant professionals, food sustainability, EI claw-back on earnings, etc.
- We need to show better what is happening in our communities so that government will be more convinced to support community-led, holistic approaches to

development; they need to see support as investment rather than simply expenditures and funding, and see community orgs as full partners in strengthening communities.

Participant Comments on the Existing Policy Framework

- The existing framework and priorities are still relevant, with many suggestions for minor changes.
- Employment development is missing the demand side focus with employers
- A focus on cross-sectoral and intra-sectoral collaborations with a variety of groups locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally
- Need more focus on organizational development and assistance to emerging groups
- Find a way to add culture and natural capital, yet find a way to integrate all the capitals more.
- Missing food, housing, child care, environment, and local control of resources
- Missing social enterprises including co-operatives
- Broader push for equity capacity for the sector; wider range of tools and strategies. Focus on the principal rather than the specific tool.
- Need to target provincial governments, not just federal
- Need more focus on capacity building for youth and immigrants.
- Overall lens of equity in developing and implementing policy
- Gender lens missing
- Ensure that “engagement” is clearly articulated as a critical component of CED

Participant Comments on Messaging

- “Working to renew low-income communities”
- “Communities wanting to have control over their destiny; take back our communities”
- “CCEDNet believes that every Canadian has the right to live in and contribute to building a strong and healthy community”
- “Communities sustaining life together”
- “Creating and encouraging self-organizing systems”
- “We ARE the mainstream!”
- “Supporting citizens and communities to purposefully and inclusively influence their economic futures to achieve their full potential and social and economic well-being”
- “People working together to build healthy communities”
- Build on the cliché “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”
- Evoke universal values; it is about inclusion and everyone’s rightful place in society. Need to be clear about why it matters; it is about economic injustice.
- Tailor messaging to various audiences (such as Conservative’s 5 priorities), but do not lose the clarity of our values and principles. Concern that “communities” will shift work into privileged communities, that “communities” is too general, and that “sustainable” can be misunderstood
- Suggested Words: investment, inclusion, innovation, responsive, flexible, hard work, build solutions, enable, empower, enrich, fairness, equity, social and economic justice, security, and engagement.

Participant Comments on Global Trends

- There is fear about many things and people. Rise of fundamentalism; destroys needs to be concerned about community
- Climate change and energy price increases will necessitate the need to find alternatives. Alternatives like solar power may shift settlement patterns
- Information technology is both a threat and opportunity
- Universal health and daycare are being threatened
- Rural communities are facing depopulation and a lack of infrastructure and tools to combat globalization. Communities with agricultural and resource-based economies are losing ground
- Aging population
- Widening poverty gap; racialization and feminization of poverty
- More recognition that investment in place-based and civil society is an effective model for community development.
- Concentration of control by a small group of multinationals. Loss of control to new global institutions like the WTO
- Rising power and influence of Aboriginal communities around the world
- Growing anti-globalization; growing power to the bottom level of the pyramid. Globalization generating community movements everywhere.

2. Canadian Women's CED Council Policy Forum

Wednesday March 15, 11:30am – 3:00pm

The conference program described this session as follows: This half day forum is focused on policy as it relates to women, particularly policies that impact women's participation in the economy. Economist and media commentator Armine Yalnizyan will provide an overview of critical policy issues that affect women's economic self-sufficiency. A panel of Experts from the Field who have learned through living and doing will tell our stories. Government Relations Experts will offer information, tools and insights to support women's participation in the policy development process. Participants will reflect individually and collectively, share strategies, insights and experiences to engage women in policy development and strengthen women-centred CED in Canada.

Approximately 80 people participated in this session.

The following priorities were identified by the women participating in the event:

1. Core funding for women's organizations at the community level
2. Amend welfare policies to
 - Stop dollar-for-dollar claw backs
 - Allow for Asset accrual
 - Transition to independence
3. Ensure there are adequate supports for women to achieve economic self-sufficiency

- Affordable housing
- Accessible, affordable, child care
- Literacy/numeracy skill development
- Access to EI, SEB and labour force training for low-income otherwise excluded
- Policies to support the large aboriginal, unemployed, under-employed labour force
- More equitable use of tax dollars, a balance between tax cuts and social programs
- Recognize the distinctive needs of rural women and the destructive impact of centralization policies of services
- Access to benefit provisions for women working in non-standard work
- Recognize the value of un-paid labour
- Collect disaggregated data on government programs to ensure responsiveness to the needs of women
- Universal standards for access to education, etc.

During the course of the forum the following direction was given to the CWCEDC by those attending:

- Motivate, move forward, exercise the power of women, mount a campaign: we're sick and tired of it, let's change it
- Share information (clearing house)
- Keep women's agenda at the table
- Get to women so they vote
- Train women to get into politics (how government works, etc.)
- Advocate for Beijing resolutions
- Provide more information about the council
- Advocate for core funding
- Influence parliamentary committee on the Status of Women
- Stay in their face
- Recruit more young women
- Keep linkages going – what's going on in the field
- National list serve, interactive website
- Review policies with a gender lens and share impact across the country
- Join other women's organizations so we can work together
- Listen to marginalized women
- Advocate on transitional issues for women on welfare
- Extend "innovation" to women and venture capital
- Provide more opportunities to meet regionally.

3. Policy Workshop I

Current Policy Issues

Thursday March 16, 9:45am – 12:15pm

This session consisted of two halves. In the first half CCEDNet's executive director (Rupert Downing) and Policy Council chair (David LePage), together with the chairs of the human capital (Eric Leviten-Reid) and CED finance (Peter Hough) subcommittees provided a report on their mandate as well as activities over the last year. In the second half of this workshop, representatives from other sectors provided an update on their activities around policy over the last year as well. This included representatives from the Canadian Women's CED Council (Carol Rock), le Chanteur de l'economie sociale (Nancy Neamtan), the Francophone community (Ethel Cote), the Canadian Community Investment Network Cooperative (Susannah Cameron), and the Aboriginal community (Geri Collins). Participants were engaged in dialogue for the last 20 minutes or so of each half of the workshop.

4. Policy Workshop II

Policy Framework Renewal III

Thursday March 16, 1:30 – 4:00pm

This workshop was again broken into two halves. In the first half, Dal Brodhead recounted the emerging priorities from the Tuesday evening and Wednesday policy renewal process and member engagement process. Roz Lockyer of the Canadian Women's CED Council presented a report from their policy forum of the previous day and Nancy Neamtan reported on the emerging policy priorities in the Quebec context. Neamtan also spoke of the various kinds of policy so as to inform and clarify CCEDNet's policy development processes. The participants were engaged in a dialogue on how policy development and advocacy can be moved forward on a common front even though it emerges out of different contexts.

The second half explored the concept of capital with new presenters. While CCEDNet has worked with the concepts of social, human, and financial capital, Peter van Gils of Ecotrust Canada implored the group to better conceptualize and integrate ecological capital in the policy framework in a more deliberate manner, and he provide several examples of how environmental initiatives and CED intersect. Yvonne Chiu explored the importance of cultural capital as one component of the capital conceptualization, citing examples from Edmonton in local communities as well as federal policies that demonstrated the importance and relevance of culture in the CED context.

5. Policy Plenary: CED and a Communities Agenda

Friday March 17, 8:00 – 9:30am

The conference program described this plenary as follows: CED is about building strong and inclusive communities in ways that create economic opportunities and improve social, environmental, and cultural conditions. While strategies vary from one community to another due to many different factors, we all know there are broader issues and trends that cut across the work we do and the communities we work in, issues that drive us to think beyond the "local only". Three leaders from the field will provoke a lively and engaging discussion around what a "Communities Agenda" needs to look like from their perspective and contemplate who we need to be engaging with outside of our "CED arena."

What are the values of/in community: Mike Lewis, Caroline Lachance and Larry Casper spoke to participants.

6. Policy Workshop III

Social Economy

Friday March 17, 9:45am – 12:15pm

Rupert Downing (CCEDNet), John Anderson (CCA), Nancy Neamtan (Chantier), and Johanne Mennie (HR & SD) provided an update on the social economy initiative as well as what was being done with the resources (in Quebec). Mennie also used this opportunity to introduce the federal policy development process that she is leading, which includes consultations in every region of Canada by the summer. Participant dialogue explored questions around the social economy initiative delivery, the context and place of the initiative within the broader context of building stronger communities, and exploring the nature and kinds of overarching policy that would be supportive of CED and the CED sector.

7. Policy Workshop IV

Policy Framework Renewal IV

Friday March 17, 1:30 – 4:00pm

Shauna MacKinnon (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Manitoba) led a discussion around the different realities and priorities that exist within different contexts, sectors, regions, and communities. Marty Donkervoort of Community Ownership Solutions in Winnipeg explained the development of Inner City Renovations (a social enterprise), including the policy challenges and organizational priorities experienced to date. Jan Morten of Trail, BC shared her experience of development in her region and named several of their policy priorities. The discussion with participants then explored how a common approach to policy advocacy can be developed despite the fact that different actors within the network/sector have different and unique priorities. MacKinnon led the dialogue, and introduced the concept of organizing around common values. One significant outcome of this dialogue was the clear message from members that they wanted CCEDNet to become more active, dynamic, and aggressive in getting involved in policy issues that mattered to the sector and also to the people that the sector works with.