

Launching Entrepreneurial Advantages for Parents

Project 2.1 Launching Rural Women's Entrepreneurship

D. Gallant (LEAP); I. Novaczek (UPEI); M. Burge (Cooper Institute); G. Baldacchino (UPEI); K. Harris (Student); C. Fall (student)

Sept. 2008

Funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité



Introduction

- Young rural parents – especially mothers – often find that their only option for income generation is to take seasonal employment that scarcely pays for the child care services that the employment necessitates. Shifts are often long and unpredictable, and child-care arrangements are problematic (patch-work). This situation has led to the hope of being able to generate income from home, or from a co-operatively run facility with child care on-site, which would allow parents to increase family income while maintaining strong day-to-day connections with their youngsters.
- This is where LEAP became born – an idea that a parent can work and bring home a decent wage while maintaining a close connection to his or her children. **We envision young families creating opportunities together for economic and social development that will help stem the tide of out-migration from our rural areas.** Communities that provide opportunities for young adults to lead productive, creative and economically viable lives are fertile ground for the cultivation of social capital.
- We envision children remaining secure in their connections with their parents, and parents able to act on the irrefutable knowledge that the primary factor in their children's eventual adult global health is the quality of the relationships in which they spend their early years. **What greater contribution to the social economy can we support than the development of citizens who operate from a base of emotional, social and physical health?**
- The LEAP model can be applied in urban communities as well as in rural ones, empowering people to break out of cycles of poorly paid seasonal work and government subsidy. **The key is to provide training and supported opportunity to develop necessary capacity, combined with child care arrangements that allow parents to maximize their involvement in their young children's day-to-day lives.**

Background and Rationale

- Although co-operative ventures are not new, there does not seem to be a large number on Prince Edward Island. One of the largest obstacles for LEAP was trying to obtain funding from government agencies as a co-operative. These agencies did not seem to grasp the grass roots approach to developing a venture and making it sellable, all the while employing parents (mostly mothers) in a child-care friendly atmosphere.
- This project links with the goals of the social economy by building upon the capacity of rural parents (often mothers) who wish to work from home and by including them with the ability to create social capital.
- LEAP did have some success in the past obtaining two viable contracts which employed a number of members allowing them to work from the home with their children.



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

Community/University Collaboration (partnership)

- LEAP has been able to partner with many special groups and individuals. We worked under Voices for Children in Montague for a few years, have had the great pleasure of being involved with the SES/ESD Network and individuals from UPEI such as Irene Novaczek, Dr. Godfrey Baldacchino and David Daughton, not to mention a few intern students along the way.
- It is very important from LEAP's point of view to stay connected to these invaluable resources and also to stay connected to our community and its people.
- We also had an opportunity to work with Marie Burge from Cooper Institute.



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

Project Methodology

This project follows the lines of Participatory Action Research. The need for LEAP came out of the community and the individuals who were affected by the challenge of contributing to their household income while wanting to provide child care. Through meetings and qualitative discussions the idea of LEAP was formed.

A qualitative case study was also created to document the LEAP project and it speaks to the challenges and difficulties that occurred.



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

Main Findings To Date

The main findings to date of the LEAP project would have to be: **the need for sustainable employment for parents with young children is an essential basic need in today's world.** In an idealistic world, this would involve on-site child care for children under school age in addition to an after school program.

We believe that creating a strong bond early on with young children will help them to grow into strong minded individuals, who will someday be leaders in their communities.

We have found that funding for programs such as ours is not easily accessible and that our co-op does not fall into the average government program. We must be innovative in our approach to leverage funding and support if we plan to continue in the future.



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

Deliverables (completed & planned)

Completed:

- Co-op Evaluation report (2006);
- Funding proposal for co-op development (2006);
- Congress paper (2007) ;
- Case study report on hurdles to rural women's economic development (2008);
- Improved supports for rural development (long term)
- LEAP's coordinator (at the time, Wendy Pobjoy) and a board member were able to attend the Canadian Women's Foundation Economic Development Collaborative Fund Atlantic Skills Institute, June 7th and 8th, 2006, Sydney, NS.
 - Focus was on
 - Social Purpose Enterprise
 - Co-op Development
 - Micro-credit Programs

Planned: We are currently looking into a possible venture to provide clerical/accounting assistance to a wide range of clients. In the process of applying for charitable status for our co-op.



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

How Students Benefited from the Project

- We have had a few students (Katie Harris and Crystal Fall) over the last few years helping us with proposal and report writing, administrative tasks, case study and presenting at a conference (CCEDNET,2007).
- These students are learning to adapt their skills to different groups who all have different goals.



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités

A Quote From Student Katie Harris

- “One of the most important parts of attending this conference for me was the chance to further extend my contacts in the CED world and to solidify those I had made within the Atlantic Node at our meeting in March. Having the opportunity to meet and greet various academics and concerned and active citizens has been very inspiring to me as a young researcher. I have truly been bitten by the Co-op ‘bug’.”
- Katie Harris attended a CCEDNET conference 2007, in relation to her work with the LEAP project.

Conclusions and Next Steps

In conclusion, LEAP is most grateful for the support of the Social Economy and Sustainability Project for all the help and guidance received to date.

I do believe our co-op idea can work given the right circumstances along with a lot of hard work and determination. Presently we are looking into a few options for future ventures for our small group that will hopefully allow us to continue and expand.



Social Economy and Sustainability Research Network
Partenariat sur l'économie sociale et la durabilité

Bridging, Bonding, and Building / Renforcement des liens et des capacités