

Exploring the Social Economy in Saskatchewan: La Ronge

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For over 20 years the La Ronge Childcare Co-operative has provided a much-needed service in the community for many Aboriginal people in order for them to pursue their education and participate in the workforce.

La Ronge Observations

- Isolation and globalization: economic leakage and new opportunities.
- Innovation in both established and new social enterprises (La Ronge Co-op, Northern Entertainment Co-operative)
- Transitory population: sustainability problems among non-Aboriginal population, especially government and mining sector skilled workers
- Growing young Aboriginal population and potential workforce
- Race, class, gender dynamics persist
- Levels of bureaucracy: two municipalities, reserve lands administered by the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, high federal and provincial government presence in the unofficial capital of northern Saskatchewan
- Many departments administer the northern region, not the community of La Ronge itself.
- Many development agencies exist



The traditional co-op sector is highly innovative in dealing with globalization. The new La Ronge Co-op Store on the main highway has stopped some of the economic leakage to the south by encouraging people to shop in La Ronge rather than Prince Albert.

La Ronge Findings

- Highway and new technologies bring new opportunities (tourism, mining) but also new problems (economic leakage) that innovative social economy players are addressing
- A culture of big government — development corporations are a key organizational form for the community
- Transitory population: some innovative players in the social economy are working to correct this with education, training, and support (KCDC, Northlands College, La Ronge Childcare Co-operative,) realizing the potential labour pool in the Aboriginal population
- Little co-ordination among development agencies and social economy actors for the same pool of grants
- Co-op and credit union key players in the new Chamber of Commerce, but new innovative co-ops emerging (Northern Entertainment Co-operative)
- Layers of bureaucracy and jurisdiction with little co-ordination
- A history of cultural tolerance, interaction, and collaboration in living in the North; however, class and underlying race and gender divisions persist
- Potential for addressing labour market and economic demands locally by developing social economy enterprises involved in education, training, and quality of life

Community Partners

Vision North
Quint Development Corporation
Child Hunger and Education Program

Status of Project

Complete

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