

CEDTAP ACROSS CANADA

Small-scale food processors organize in British Columbia

The Small Scale Food Processors Association (SSFPA) seeks to address regional food sustainability. Their recent emergence as an agricultural association indicates how small-scale producers are identifying new markets for locally grown, organic products despite overall sector decline. While the value of this emerging industry is not known, it is estimated that over 600 small-scale businesses operate within the \$4.8 billion provincial food and beverage industry.

CEDTAP and other provincial partners supported four SSFPA regional workshops. The goal was to address the barriers to formal market entry by linking small-scale processors with key businesses in the supply chain. The technical assistance provider, Community Venture Development Services, assisted the Association in launching 'Living Inventory', a Web-based tool that links the Association's 92 members with suppliers and distributors. They also helped develop a draft strategic plan for the growing network.

Alberta social enterprises recognize the value of evaluation

Distinctive Employment Counseling Services of Alberta (DESCA) attempts to reduce employment barriers for Albertans with mental and physical disabilities. The agency is developing two new social enterprises for their clients: a creative arts business and a catering company. While the businesses are still in the planning stages, DESCA and its advisory committee members (who work in a variety of social and government agencies) have identified *evaluation* as a key element in project planning.

CEDTAP is providing technical assistance through Yelland Research and Evaluation Services to design a comprehensive evaluation framework and implementation plan. By introducing evaluation at an early-stage, monitoring of the social enterprises is greatly enhanced. While DESCA staff prepares to train employees and assist with business operations, the management team will have an effective evaluation tool to contribute to the businesses' long-term sustainability.

A CROSS-COUNTRY REPORT

By the National Secretariat

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Business planning is a learning process for a Toronto social enterprise

Dixon Hall, a multi-purpose social agency, operates The Mill Centre from a 2,000 square foot building in Toronto's east end. The Centre, in operation since 1996, is a woodworking and welding social enterprise that sells institutional and retail furniture built by people whom are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The agency also delivers support to employees in areas such as housing and social workshops.

The agency wanted to undertake a business planning process to strengthen the Centre's long-term viability. CEDTAP technical assistance provider, John Pepin and Associates, guided the Centre through business planning and implementation. The agency learned how difficult it was to develop a sound business plan within a regulatory environment lacking in social enterprise policies. Despite the complexities, they also realized how substantial planning in the early stages of a business leads to positive change.



The "Dignity Sideboard"; one of the many hand crafted products from The Mill Centre in Toronto. The Centre is a woodworking and welding social enterprise that employs people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Assessing the feasibility of a community-owned B&B in Montréal

Since 1986, Cuisine Collective Hochelaga-Maisonneuve has been serving up innovative job training alongside creative cooking in Montréal's east end. The provincial government has recognized their community kitchen model as a leading job training program for economically marginalized residents.

The Collective approached CEDTAP to assess the possibility of expanding beyond the agri-food industry. The technical assistance provider, Darvinda Conseil, conducted a feasibility study on the establishment of a "gîte du passant" or Bed & Breakfast in a historic cottage that adjoins their community kitchen. The five-room building could offer three guest rooms to visitors from the community and social development sector as well as from government. The unique community-owned B&B could serve the Collective's prepared meals to guests as well as offer job training in small hotel management.

Preparing for growth in Nova Scotia's cultural tourism industry

In the community of Iona, Nova Scotia, the Highland Village Museum serves as a focal point for the region's rich Gaelic history but also as a local economic driver. Residents work at the Museum and 23,000 visitors contribute to the local economy each year.

To date, provincial grants for renovations have not included a new visitor and cultural centre. Additionally, the Museum is still not recognized as a certified artifact and archive centre (the 800,000 digitized record collection attracts genealogy researchers from across North America). With CEDTAP support, the heritage consultant team of Catherine Cole and Associates conducted a feasibility study for the Museum while Trifos Design Consultants supplied design expertise. The feasibility study equips the Museum with the necessary technical and financial projections to plan for its future expansion.

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