

NUNAVUT SOCIAL ECONOMY

SPRING 2009



Piviniit Society members can't wait to open Iqaluit's first thrift store.

THRIFTY BUSINESS

THE PIVINIIT SOCIETY'S THRIFT STORE WILL JOIN HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS DRIVING NUNAVUT'S SOCIAL ECONOMY.

It's taken a few years to get there, but an enthusiastic group of volunteers hope to open Iqaluit's first thrift store this spring.

Profits from the Piviniit Society's retail space will

eventually be plowed back into other community initiatives. In the meantime, by subleasing a room from the city's new soup kitchen, it will provide

THRIFT CONT. PAGE 4

MAPPING NUNAVUT'S SOCIAL ECONOMY

300 "BACKBONE" GROUPS LISTED

Researchers are building a snapshot of Nunavut's thriving social economy, in hopes of developing tools to support it in the future.

"One of the unique things in Northern Canada is the absolute importance of its social economy," said project lead Chris Southcott, of Lakehead University. "First and foremost we want to show this, the extent of these organizations, and the unique types that exist in the North."

The portraiture survey of social economy organizations got its start in 2006, and is taking place in all three territories.

It's one of a number of projects being conducted under the umbrella of the Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada (SERNNOCA).

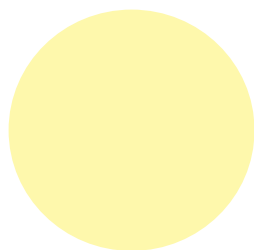
The term social economy is used to describe non-governmental organizations where profit is not the primary purpose, like co-ops, according to Southcott.

During the initial stage of the survey, over 300 such groups were identified in Nunavut, ranging from arts co-ops to hockey associations.

"In a region of less than 40,000 people, to have so many is incredible," Southcott said.

SURVEY CONT. PAGE 3

“PEOPLE
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WHAT IS SERNNOCA?

The Social Economy Research Network of Northern Canada (SERNNOCA) is a five-year research program focusing on the social economy of the North.

One of six regional networks across the country, it's made up of community partners, colleges and universities in Nunavut, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Labrador.

Its work is supported by the largest grant for social science research ever awarded in northern Canada.

Dr. Chris Southcott of Lakehead University is the principal investigator of the network. The Yukon College is the lead institution to administer the \$1.75 million grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for its implementation.



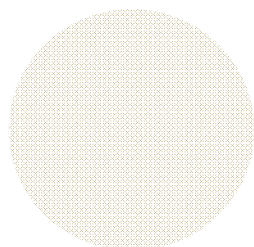
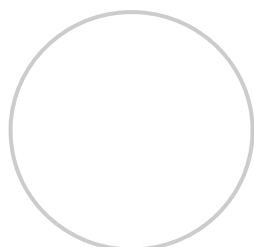
WHAT DOES IT DO?

The aim of the program is to connect researchers and their community partners with others who are researching social economy in the North.

The knowledge they collect could:

- Help develop the social economy in Nunavut
- Demonstrate the importance of the social economy in the territory

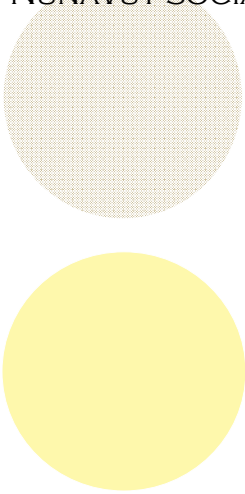
- Bring a local perspective to the discussion of sustainable development
- Ensure northern students have a chance to participate and gain experience in the research
- Improve the way organizations important to the social economy function



For more information, please see <http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/sernnoca>

SERNNOCA'S PARTNERS:





Piviniit Society's Yvonne Earle and Rhoda Palluq hope a non-profit thrift store will give back to the community in a big way.

SURVEY CONT. FROM PAGE 1

Response rate to a subsequent questionnaire - intended to develop an in-depth profile of each organization - was lower than expected. Only about 20 per cent responded.

"A lot of these organizations are really busy and don't have a lot of time to fill out a long form," admitted Southcott.

This summer, the survey will be rolled out in a different way, likely using students to collect the information in various communities.

Organizations will be asked questions related to the type of services they offer, their governance structures and the number of people employed.

"We hope to show the government and others the impor-

tance of these kinds of organizations and what they do. What problems are they facing, and what can help them work?" Southcott said. "And we want to point out that these are the types of organizations that people have the most control over. Usually anyone who wants to can volunteer, and have a say in its direction."

As the country suffers under recent economic downturn, the impact of these organizations only greatens, he pointed out.

"(They are) the backbone of communities. People rely on it when the economy goes through the booms and busts," he said.

The project is funded until March 2011. Southcott said he hopes to have results to share by then.

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Would you like to contribute to the next issue of Nunavut Social Economy?

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THRIFTY BUSINESS

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much-needed income to a fellow charity.

“What we’re envisioning having for sale is stuff that’s good quality, good condition,” said group member Yvonne Earle. “We’ve already received a number of nearly-new Canada Goose parkas and piles of clothes with the tags still on.”

The roots of the project date back to 2005, when a few friends began brainstorming the community's needs. A group of local men and women was then formed to tackle the project.

Finding a location was the first stumbling block, and the long road to where they are now

was sometimes discouraging, according to Piviniit member Carol Gregson.

“But it’s finally coming to fruition, and that is really exciting,” she said.

The Qayuqtuvik Society, which will be responsible for the soup kitchen, rents the building from the local Anglican Diocese. It will then sublease part of the space to Piviniit—a win-win situation for all groups involved.

The store will likely be open a few times per week. Although initially staffed by volunteers, the group would like to see that shift into employment and training, according to Earle.

Piviniit will also work in tandem with other local organizations, such as the women’s shelter, according to member Rhoda Palluq.

Until opening, donated goods continue to overflow two sea cans and volunteers’ homes.

“We’ve had so much support already, we just have a bit more work to do,” Gregson said.

SERNNOCA RESEARCH IN NUNAVUT:

SERNNoCA has divided its research in the three territories into four themes:

THEME 1—Profile of the social economy in the North – portraiture survey of social economy organizations.

Chris Southcott, Lakehead University

THEME 2—Resource regimes and the social economy in the North

Brenda Parlee, University of Alberta

THEME 3—The State and the Northern social economy

Frances Abele, Carleton University

THEME 4—Indigenous communities and the social economy

David Natcher, University of Saskatchewan

The Nunavut Research Institute in Iqaluit is a community partner with a number of subprojects.

