

2014 NS Social Enterprise Sector Survey Report

Purpose

This study represents an updated study of social enterprises in Nova Scotia. This research follows up on the research done in the province in 2011 and published by George Karaphillis and Amanda Tarr of Cape Breton University. The goal of this research is to profile social enterprises in the province, and contribute to a pan-Canadian understanding of this important, emerging sector. Specifically, the research seeks to capture key dimensions of the social enterprise arena by highlighting the size, scope, and nature of the activities occurring in the sector. The survey of social enterprises in Nova Scotia (NS) was conducted in the spring of 2014 and respondents were asked to report on their activities during their previous operating period (to year end 2013).

Other provincial studies have analyzed social enterprises in British Columbia (2010, 2012, 2014), Alberta (2010, 2012), Manitoba (2011, 2014), Nova Scotia (2011), New Brunswick (2011, 2014), Ontario (2013), Prince Edward Island (2014) and the three Territories (2014).

Community Partners

Common Good Solutions Inc. (CGS) led the Nova Scotia research and provided the bulk of the project funding in order to hire primary researchers, build our sample list of social enterprises, and provide the resources necessary to complete the research. CGS identified 1,170 NS social enterprises and completed detailed surveys with the 232 organizations profiled in the full report. The company also provided context and local expertise to the analysis of the report findings.

Process

Given the objectives of the study (to generate widely intelligible quantitative indicators of the impact of the social enterprise activity in Nova Scotia), we opted for a sample survey method using a short and highly standardized questionnaire designed for easy completion, and to maximize the response rate. The creation of the survey structure and contents of the final report are credited to Dr. Peter R. Elson and Priscilla Wamucii from Mount Royal University, Dr. Peter Hall of Simon Fraser University and Stephanie Pronk of Common Good Solutions.



Innovation, Collaboration, Impact

Nova Scotian Social Enterprises are...



Disclaimer: This profile accounts for responses from the 232 responding social enterprises and should not be viewed as a reflection of all social enterprises in Nova Scotia.

Key Findings

Nova Scotia's Social Enterprises...

Help the Environment

33% of survey respondents report to have an environmental focus.

Are Innovative

NS SE's are developing new projects in: affordable housing developments, new fibre, green houses, healthcare solutions, international development, new arts productions, seniors' support services, software, storytelling, quality assurance, and more.

Operate Internationally

9% of surveyed Social Enterprises in Nova Scotia operate on an international scale, while the majority (61%) operate at the city/town scale, or smaller.

Run Independently

The majority of profiled social enterprises in Nova Scotia (76%) operate as their own entity, with no non-profit or other governing or related "parent."

Support the Community

Social enterprises in Nova Scotia are most likely to operate at the scale of neighbourhood or local community (71%), at the city or town scales (61%) and/or regional district (49%) scales.

Strategically Focus

60% focus on people living in the immediate neighbourhood as their target population. Other SE's focused on people with intellectual disabilities (24%) and youth (23%).

Attract Volunteers

NS SE's utilized 20,700 full- and part-time volunteers, where 2,900 contributed 10 or more hours per month.

Rely on Grants

The main sources of grants for social enterprises were provincial (50%), federal (32%) and municipal governments (23%). Other sources included private individuals (42%), foundations (21%) and corporations (19%). 28 percent of social enterprises in NS received no grants.

Key Findings

Nova Scotia's Social Enterprises...

Make Money

NS SE's total revenue = \$198 million, with a total surplus (profit) of \$19 million. 76% broke even, 41% w/o grants.

Are Planning for Growth

55% of surveyed social enterprises have projects in the next three years that will require additional funding of at least \$600,000 to \$1 million in capital. However, only about 43 percent indicated that they can access capital or financing to grow.

Create New Jobs

Social enterprises provided paid employment for at least 5,630 people in NS. This includes fulltime, part-time, seasonal and contract workers, who together earned at least \$84 million in wages and salaries.

Are Non-Profit Structured

73% of the surveyed social enterprises have a non-profit structure. 54% were registered charities. 11% described themselves as for-profit; they are owned by a nonprofit parent and work to fund their parent non-profit.

Create New Workers

4,470 were employed as part of the mission of the social enterprise, like those with disabilities and/or other employment barriers.

Have a Social Purpose

83% of NS social enterprises describe themselves as having a social purpose, while 35% operate to achieve a cultural purpose. 28% work towards employment development, 25% focus on the environment and 20% on training for workforce organization.

Operate in Seven Sectors

50% of SE's sell products and services in two or more sectors. A significant proportion of social enterprises operated in the accommodations, food and tourism sector (46%), while many others focus on the health and social services sector (44%).

Are Well Established

The mean age of social enterprises in NS was 26 years, the median: 22.