

ARUC-ÉS AND RQRP-ÉS :

TWO UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TOOLS FOR THE

• • • • • SOCIAL ECONOMY MOVEMENT • • • • •

Communities in Québec and across Canada are increasingly acknowledging that **THE SOCIAL ECONOMY** is a tool for social, cultural, political and economic development. The *Alliance de recherche universités-communautés en économie sociale* (ARUC-ÉS) and the *Réseau québécois de recherche partenariale en économie sociale* (RQRP-ÉS) have been contributing to this process since they were founded in 2000 and 2005 respectively. How? By coordinating research related to the social economy, along with educational, distribution, and knowledge-sharing activities.

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**ARUC-ÉS IS THE FIRST QUÉBEC
INTERUNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRE
THAT IS EXCLUSIVELY DEDICATED
TO PARTNERED RESEARCH RELATED
TO THE SOCIAL ECONOMY.**

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Between 2000 and 2006, over 100 research projects were completed, which led to the publication of research findings and the organization of seminars, workshops, and conferences. These activities were carried out by more than 160 researchers and partners who are active in the social economy, from universities, research centres, and various collective businesses and non-profit organizations, mostly based in Québec, but also in the rest of Canada and many other countries like Belgium, Brazil, England, France, and Venezuela.

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**RQRP-ÉS IS ONE OF SIX CANADIAN CENTRES
THAT ARE DEDICATED TO PARTNERED RESEARCH
RELATED TO THE SOCIAL ECONOMY.**

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Partnership is at the core of the work of these two research centres.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF ARUC-ÉS AND RQRP-ÉS?

- To lead social-economy related research and to produce knowledge that is useful to community development by coordinating networks of researchers and community partners;
- To stimulate and support social-economy related education by organizing workshops and involving students in all activities;
- To disseminate research findings by issuing various publications and organizing seminars, conferences, and conventions;
- To promote the sharing of knowledge between universities and communities and the use of research findings within the social economy movement.

A COMMON RESEARCH FOCUS: THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

The phrase *social economy* refers to a movement that is more than 100 years old. Since the 1980s, the movement has experienced a revival, not only in Québec and Canada, but around the world as well. As the name suggests, the movement pursues both economic and social objectives: economic because it involves businesses and organizations that produce goods and social services, and social because the pursuit of profits is subordinate to fostering values such as democracy, solidarity, improved quality of life, and sustainable development.

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**DID YOU KNOW THAT
CHILDCARE CENTRES (CPE),
HOUSING COOPERATIVES,
NON-PROFIT RECYCLING BUSINESSES,
AND JOURNÉES DE LA CULTURE
ARE ALL PART OF THE
SOCIAL ECONOMY SECTOR?**

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In 2001, the social economy in Québec involved over 7,000 businesses and organizations, employed 124,300 people and accounted for \$17.2 billion in revenue. Today, it works alongside the public and private sectors and represents a significant portion of the Québec economy.

During the *Sommet sur l'économie et l'emploi* that was held in Montréal in 1996, Québec's social economy movement acquired three instruments to sustain its growth: the *Chantier de l'économie sociale* for the political dimension; the *Comité sectoriel de main-d'œuvre en économie sociale et en action communautaire* (CSMO-ÉSAC) for skills training; and the *Réseau d'investissement social du Québec* (RISQ) for funding. ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS are new tools that are intended to meet the research and development needs of the social economy movement.

A COMMON APPROACH: UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The work of ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS is based on a tradition that dates back to the founding of the Université du Québec à Montréal in 1969: partnered research. At its most basic, this approach involves researchers and community partners teaming up on various work teams at every stage of the research process. More specifically, it entails combining knowledge and techniques in order to develop research projects that will be of valuable to both the academic world and the community, and that will ensure a two-way exchange of knowledge.

Among Québec's social economy research sector, this approach is unique to ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS.

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**ARUC-ÉS AND RQRP-ÉS ARE THE ONLY
SOCIAL ECONOMY RESEARCH CENTRES
IN QUÉBEC THAT OPERATE ON THE PRINCIPLE
OF UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP.**

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This desire to bring the spheres of research and action closer together is reflected in how ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS are organized. Both centres are jointly headed by Professor Jean-Marc Fontan of the Sociology Department at UQAM and Nancy Neamtan, head of the *Chantier de l'économie sociale*. Work teams are supervised by a representative of the academic world and a representative from the field of the social economy. This same collaboration is found on governing bodies (management teams, coordinating committees, research teams, etc.).

ARUC-ÉS AND RQRP-ÉS: TWO COMPLEMENTARY STRUCTURES

While ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS have a common research focus and approach, what distinguishes them are the spheres of action of their respective work teams: ARUC-ÉS's teams are dealing with issues related to different sectors of the social economy (housing, social tourism, finance, services for people, development), while RQRP-ÉS teams work on a these issues but on a territorial basis.

THE 5 CAPS OF ARUC-ÉS:

- SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS
- COMMUNITY HOUSING
- RECREATION AND SOCIAL TOURISM
- RESPONSIBLE FINANCING
- LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ARUC-ÉS coordinates five partnered activity teams (*chantiers d'activités partenariales* - CAPs) that focus on five work areas: services for individuals; community housing; recreation and social tourism; responsible financing; and local and regional development.

In the spring of 2006, the CAPs were engaged in more than 50 active research projects*. The following illustrate the variety of issues that are being addressed in the different fields.

- Portrait of the co-operative housing movement in Québec
- Factors affecting access to recreation
- The role of the social economy in reconvertng the garment industry: The path to developing new job skills
- Marketing practices of social economy businesses
- Mergers among health and social services establishments: What is the future of the CLSC's mandate and mission?

Research findings are published in booklets that are added to the *Cahiers de l'ARUC-ÉS* series, and are presented at seminars and conferences.

THE 8 GRAPS OF RQRP-ÉS:

- ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE • OUTAOUAIS
- ESTRIE • MONTRÉAL • MAURICIE
- QUÉBEC/CHAUDIÈRE-APPALACHES
- SAGUENAY/LAC-SAINT-JEAN
- BAS-SAINT-LAURENT

The RQRP-ÉS consists of eight regional partnered activity groups (*Groupes régionaux d'activités partenariales* - GRAPs) that are set up in regions of Québec with a university: Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Outaouais, Estrie, Montréal, Mauricie, Québec/Chaudière-Appalaches, Saguenay/Lac-Saint-Jean, and Bas-Saint-Laurent. Bringing together the social economy hub and the local university in each region, the GRAPs organize their research programs in response to the locally identified social economy research needs.

In the spring of 2006, RQRP-ÉS was involved in coordinating more than 20 research projects*. The following are examples of issues that are being dealt with in five of the eight regions covered by GRAPs.

- The contribution of the social economy to rural development: The case of Bas-Saint-Laurent
- Linking income support policies and workforce development in Montréal
- Conditions for the emergence of social economy businesses in Saguenay/Lac-Saint-Jean
- A portrait of the social economy in the Mauricie region
- Inventory, benefits, and the contribution of community gardens to the regional economy in the Québec/Chaudière-Appalaches regions

* The complete list of ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS research projects, publications, and other activities is available at our website, www.aruc-es.uqam.ca

PARTNERED ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL ECONOMY: A PRACTICE TO BE CULTIVATED

In order to fulfill their respective missions, ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS receive subsidies and much needed support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and their many partners. With university-community partnerships well established, research proceeding apace, and the dissemination of findings assured, their focus between now and 2009 will be on making knowledge-sharing even more dynamic, in order to stimulate the use of research findings in social economy practices and in the shaping of public policies. In this respect, the ongoing cooperation between social economy researchers and practitioners is a valuable asset for ARUC-ÉS and RQRP-ÉS.

HOW TO REACH US

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LEADING PARTNERS IN ARUC-ÉS AND RQRP-ÉS

- Association des groupes de ressources techniques du Québec
- Chantier de l'économie sociale
- Comité sectoriel de la main-d'œuvre en économie sociale et en action communautaire (CSMO-ÉSAC)
- Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
- Conseil québécois du loisir
- Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ)
- Fondation de la CSN
- Fonds de solidarité de la FTQ
- Pôles régionaux d'économie sociale
- Réseau d'investissement social du Québec (RISQ)
- Concordia University
- Université de Sherbrooke
- Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC)
- Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)
- Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR)
- Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR)
- Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT)
- Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO)
- Université Laval



L'ARUC-ÉS et le RQRP-ÉS are jointly headed by Nancy Neamtan head of the *Chantier de l'économie sociale* and Professor Jean-Marc Fontan of the Sociology Department at UQAM.

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ALLIANCE DE RECHERCHE UNIVERSITÉS - COMMUNAUTÉS
RÉSEAU QUÉBÉCOIS DE RECHERCHE PARTENARIALE