

Connecting business students to social enterprises through the International Laboratory on Urban Development and Poverty Reduction in Winnipeg

2015 is off to a great start for the International KIP laboratory and its partners in Winnipeg.

The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) – Manitoba and Asper School of Business, University of Manitoba, both part of the Laboratory, are starting a partnership to promote alternative economic models with students in the Masters of Business Administration and Undergraduate programs.

Marci Elliott, Executive Director of the Asper MBA Program, shares her enthusiastic feedback, showing interest in developing the partnership through student work placements in social enterprises:

“The Asper MBA program understands that social enterprises make important and valuable contributions to the community, to society and to business. It is important that MBA students understand firsthand what those contributions are, their impact (socially, financially, and politically) and how to measure that impact. Social enterprises represent a golden opportunity for MBA students to put business theory into practice through applied business projects. These applied projects offer work experience that enhances an MBA’s perception, perspective and thinking. Our vision for partnership is a win-win scenario where social enterprise reaps the benefit of business consultation and MBA students get hands on experience working shoulder to shoulder with social enterprise”.

Sarah Leeson-Klym, Manitoba Regional Director at CCEDNet, further emphasises the importance of the partnership:

“At the Canadian CED Network we believe in communities directing their own futures, being empowered to create fair, healthy, sustainable community economies. We need people from all walks of life and every sector to get engaged around finding solutions to some of the serious challenges we’re facing like poverty and social exclusion. Our members are creating solutions that are innovative, community-led, holistic, and inclusive”.



Group discussion at CCEDNet's meeting with students of the MBA program at Asper School of Business

“Part of our work as staff supporting the Network is to connect to other sectors and new, potential allies to spread awareness of the great work happening to reduce poverty, create opportunities, and engage people around how to strengthen their local economy. Through our partnership with the International Laboratory on Urban Development and Poverty Reduction, we’ve connected with the Asper School of Business. We’re excited about the potential for engaging skilled students with an interest in applying their education and experience to solving community challenges. We especially hope the awareness of challenges and solutions we bring will open these students to a deeper understanding of their community and how they can be part of creating strong, healthy, and fair Canadian communities.”

The relevance of such collaboration finds confirmation in the recently launched Manitoba Social Enterprise Strategy, a strategic approach to scaling up the impact of the social enterprise sector, that CCEDNet and the Province of Manitoba co-created.

One of the recommendations of the Strategy is in fact that of exploring new ways to attract business students to the sector.

KIP is proud to see the Laboratory being the place where the foundations for this step are built.

To learn more about the Manitoba Social Enterprise Strategy, click [here](#).