

Sustainable
Capacity
Foundation



Report

Sustainable Social Enterprises

Project Incubation and Case Studies





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Introduction

What are social enterprises?

A social enterprise is a business with a mission. The Ottawa sustainability sector has become a leader in developing profitable social enterprises that serve the sustainability community. In particular, the social enterprise efforts have filled a niche for capacity services that strengthen the work of charitable and nonprofit organizations.

“Social Enterprises are “double-bottom-line” organizations; that is, organizations designed to earn a profit and fulfill a social mission.” - **Social Enterprise for Canada**

In the sustainability sector, social enterprises often have a triple-bottom-line to advance profit, people, and the planet.

Report Case Studies

In this report, there are several examples of social enterprise incubation in the Eastern Ontario sustainability sector supported by the Sustainable Capacity Foundation.



“The Sustainable Capacity Foundation has provided financial support to help incubate social enterprises in the region.”

Kristina Inrig, President
President & CEO
Sustainable Capacity Foundation



CASE STUDIES

Social Enterprise Incubation





GreenBooks

Social Enterprise: GreenBooks

Incubation Date: 2015

Social Enterprise Overview: GreenBooks is a full service bookkeeping social enterprise that supports the sustainability sector.

Clients: There are currently 31 bookkeeping clients who benefit from the GreenBooks service.



GreenBooks Story of Development



Capacity Challenge: The books and record keeping for environmental organizations are often in disarray. Staff and volunteers may lack financial capacity for success.

Social Enterprise Solution: GreenBooks enhances financial management practices and keeps organizations on track financially by conducting bookkeeping and financial support.



Sarah Haclro
Bookkeeper



Erik Pervin
Bookkeeper



Chantel Haigh
Intern

History and Growth

GreenBooks is a full-service bookkeeping social enterprise that was launched in Ottawa in 2015 by Sustainable Eastern Ontario. With funding from the Ottawa Community Foundation in 2015, GreenBooks expanded from 2 to 7 clients by 2016. With additional funding in 2017, the service expanded to 12 local clients. There are now over 31 clients involved in this service and demand continues to rise.

In 2020, the Sustainable Capacity Foundation provided funding to GreenBooks to expand its services across Canada. As part of this transition to move beyond Eastern Ontario, GreenBooks structured itself as a federally incorporated not-for-profit organization and began developing tools and materials to position itself for national outreach.



“As the Executive Director of a nonprofit organization, I rely heavily on the services of GreenBooks for our payroll and accounts payable. It is a great resource on whom I can count!”

Marie Veilleux,
Executive Director,
Maison Tucker House





eco-internships

Eco-Internships

Social Enterprise: Eco-Internships

Incubation Date: 2017

Social Enterprise Overview: Eco-Internships helps small environmental organizations access wage subsidy programs.

Clients: Over 37 organizations have worked with Eco-Internships to host 97 internships in environmental organizations.



Capacity Challenge: Small environmental organizations do not have the HR capacity to scale up activities and to reach sustainability targets and goals.

Social Enterprise Solution: Youth interns can complement more permanent part-time staff and/or core volunteers. Eco-Internships helps ENGOs get and maintain intern roles.

History and Growth

Sustainable Eastern Ontario has been helping ENGOs access wage subsidy grants and internship funding for many years. In 2020, as a direct result of declining staffing support due to Covid-19, SEO formalized its internship program to build up the sector. It established a social enterprise, Eco-Internships, to support and expand the internship program.

Funding from the Sustainable Capacity Foundation has supported the creation of the Eco-Internships social enterprise.



Kim
2017



Dom
2018



Charlie
2018



Joanna
2019



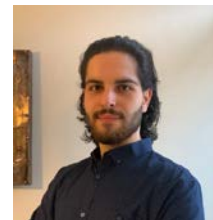
Nasha
2020



Nick
2020



Aashna
2021



Omar
2021



Capacity Building Institute

Social Enterprise: Capacity Building Institute

Incubation Date: 2019

Social Enterprise Overview: The Capacity Building Institute is a training organization that provides capacity-building training in 6 core capacity areas.

Clients: Over 39 organizations and 143 individuals have taken part in training programs offered by the Capacity Building Institute.



Capacity Challenge: Small environmental groups face major capacity challenges that impact their ability to effectively operate their organizations.

Social Enterprise Solution: Professional development and training in core capacity competencies was needed in the sector. The Capacity Building Institute provides capacity training services for the small-shop environmental sector.



Michelle Singh
Bookkeeper



David Miller
Bookkeeper



Sun Shan
Intern



Akil Mesiwala
Intern



Devanshi Kukadia
Intern

History and Growth

The flagship program of the Capacity Building Institute is the Capacity Building Certificate Program. This program was launched in 2019 as a partnership between the Capacity Building Institute and Sustainable Eastern Ontario. This was part of a growing effort to train and support capacity building in the sector. After successfully executing the first cohort in 2019-2020, the Capacity Building Institute was incorporated in 2020 as interest in the program was growing across the country. As part of the COVID-19 response, the training institute expanded virtually and was able to offer the program to participants anywhere in Canada.

In addition to the Capacity Building Certificate Program (now in its third year), the Capacity Building Institute also offers the Internship Training Program and the Fundraising Intensive. These paid programs are complemented by a free workshop series on How to be an Executive Director and How to be a Board member. Funding from the Sustainable Capacity Foundation has enabled the Capacity Building Institute to formalize the social enterprise as its own entity and to develop plans for virtual adaptation and scaling.



“This program is uniquely catered to the needs and challenges facing small non-profit organizations in Canada- and has been hugely beneficial to us as we’ve rapidly grown our team.”

Dominique Souris
Executive Director,
Youth Climate Lab





ECO 
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Eco Executive Director

Social Enterprise: Eco Executive Director

Incubation Date: 2021

Social Enterprise Overview: Eco Executive Director is a shared service for administration and executive functions.

Clients: Eco Executive Director has 5 clients for the 2021 pilot project. Upon completion of a successful pilot, the social enterprise will expand its services and offerings in 2022.



eco-internships



Capacity Challenge: Small environmental organizations struggle to maintain a paid ED position and can be overwhelmed by administrative tasks.

Social Enterprise Solution: Eco Executive Director offers a shared ED role to support administration and operations.

History and Growth

The challenge of maintaining a paid ED position is well-known by small-shop environmental organizations in Eastern Ontario. While contract program staff and short-term internships are readily available through various funding sources, the need for a consistent presence to support administration is a constant challenge.

It was clear as organizations began their recovery from COVID that administrative support was critical as many groups had to lay off most and sometimes all staff during parts of the pandemic. Based on interviewing organizations across the sector, the need for a shared ED role became apparent and Eco Executive Director was proposed in Fall 2020. After initial research and recruiting a Board of Directors, the organization was established in Spring 2021. The pilot for this service launched in September 2021 with 5 local organizations as part of the test run. The goal is to develop a stable model for the service with a plan to expand the offering regionally in 2022.

The Sustainable Capacity Foundation provided funding to Eco Executive Director in 2020 and 2021 in order to formalize its objectives, incorporate the social enterprise, and establish the initial pilot.



“We take care of your administration so you can focus on your important sustainable work.”

Jessica Legere
Eco Executive Director



Conclusions

Social Enterprises have become an increasingly important part of the charitable and nonprofit sector. While there are many diverse representations of social enterprises in Canada, the Eastern Ontario environmental community has created a niche for capacity-building social enterprises that serve to strengthen and support the ENGO landscape.

The Sustainable Capacity Foundation is proud to be part of the solution by funding the incubation and expansion of these capacity social enterprises. In collaboration with other key funders in the community, we have been able to support their development, growth, and expansion.





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