

# **The Social Economy: Approaches, Practices and a Proposal for a New Community-University Alliance (CURA)**

by  
**Benoît Lévesque**  
Université du Québec à Montréal  
and  
**Marguerite Mendell**  
Concordia University, Canada

**Journal of Rural Cooperation, 33(1), 2005:21-45**

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## **Abstract**

This document provides an overview of selected theoretical and empirical approaches to define a research proposal for a new CURA (Community-University Research Alliance) on the social economy to be launched in 2005. The authors' goal is also to spark the interest of researchers in the social economy. With this in mind, the first section represents an attempt to provide a theoretical and empirical framework for the social economy, drawing on complementary concepts such as the third sector, where appropriate. In the second section, we emphasize the need for an inventory of innovative practices in the field and for statistics to quantify the activities of the social economy and the resources involved. In the third section, we identify the main research directions and questions based not only on our own knowledge but also on a review of the literature. In the final section, we make some suggestions as to how the specific nature of this new program will relate to the existing CURA program.