



Vision:

Transforming Needs into Opportunities to Build Vibrant Rural Economies

Mission:

We promote and support social enterprises by assisting entrepreneurs through knowledge-sharing, access to resources, and venture development while we establish a collaborative rural alliance for the purpose of encouraging social innovation.

Guiding Principles:

- Social Justice** We seek economic solutions to create progressive social change.
Capacity Building We seek innovative responses that enhance community life.
Empowerment We seek community based approaches to address rural needs.

SERA Community Ventures

SERA (Social Enterprise Rural Alliance) began in 2009 with a small group of local people from the not for profit, community, education and business sectors. With a grant from the South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation we produced **“From Need to Opportunity: Building Vibrant Rural Communities.”** This publication gathered the best practices from rural social enterprises in British Columbia and Nova Scotia to serve as a practical manual for those interested in exploring social enterprise. It is posted on our website: www.seracommunityventures.ca.

SERA was incorporated in October 2011 as SERA Community Ventures Ltd., an Ontario non-profit corporation with a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board formed a Collaborative with North House Transitional Housing, The Nourish and Develop Foundation and The Brock Community Health Centre and secured a Trillium grant of \$201,900.00 over 3 years to hire staff to assist with the further development of an organization developing social enterprises as a vehicle to strengthen the rural economy.

SERA CV has been instrumental in developing 3 Social Enterprises which continue to grow and prosper:

North House Catering –provides training and employability skills for their clients who are at risk of being homeless. Profits from the enterprise provide funds for other North House programs.



Just Cause- A renovation and construction company that only hires individuals with barriers to employment and are “on the system”.

Brock Renewable Energy Cooperative – A renewable energy cooperative formed to bring biogas technologies, converting compost waste and livestock manure into electricity, to Brock Township. The cooperative’s objectives are to create a vehicle for local investing in a “green” technology, community ownership over energy and retaining profits in the community.

SERA CV has provided staff support to help the Brock Youth Centre implement its Youth Entrepreneur Program. This support has led to BYC securing \$60,000 to hire staff to engage local youth in entrepreneurship. Eight youth led businesses have been launched.

SERA is partnering with GTTI and Just Cause to deliver a renovation construction training program at GTTI, Georgina Trades Training Inc., in Sutton. This program serves 45 youth with barriers in Brock and Georgina Townships providing training, certificates and employment to enhance the local workforce in this area.

SERA CV is a member of the Food Hub Collaborative with North House Transitional Housing, The Nourish and Develop Foundation and The Brock Youth Centre that is developing a \$1mil Food Hub to enhance local food security, improve community cohesion and provide a link between local produce and livestock farmers and consumers who want to buy and eat local food. Local producers and entrepreneurs will be able to use the facilities to create value added products. The Food Hub will be located in Cannington in the historic bakery on York Street. We anticipate opening in the spring of 2015.

SERA CV also presents workshops and webinars on social, community and economic development and pursues partnerships with other organizations interested in being part of the development of Brock Township and other rural areas that face similar economic development challenges.

SERA CV is developing its board of directors to include more people with business experience to help us grow the organization. We want Brock Township to demonstrate that smaller rural communities can develop and maintain vibrant and sustainable economies. Please join us in this exciting adventure.