

# ANSER-ARES

Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research  
Association de recherche sur les organismes sans but lucratif  
et de l'économie sociale

## Organizing for our Future: An On-Going Three Year Forecast Framework

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## ANSER-ARES Board of Directors (2014-2015)

### Alphabetical listing

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## **Membership Matters**

*The strength of ANSER-ARES is its members.*

*Bringing value to the membership is our purpose.*

In 2011, ANSER-ARES embarked on a formal strategic planning process that brought focus to the development plans for the organization. It is now time to renew the strategic plan and determine our top priorities for the next three years. One of the key challenges ANSER-ARES faces is membership recruitment, retention and engagement beyond the annual conference. Already this year, ANSER-ARES has made great strides in order to revamp its website. Our next step will be to enhance ANSER-ARES services and communications to increase member engagement and value.

### **Background**

ANSER-ARES was initiated by an activist organizing group in the fall of 2007, enlarged into an executive committee in the summer of 2008, and now is an incorporated nonprofit organization with a functioning board of directors and more than 115 members. The organization has been able to move ahead because of the energy of the organizers and board and because of the commitment of its members.

ANSER-ARES's has a working board involving members taking on helping roles: conference, journal, newsletter, bylaws, treasurer, minutes, etc. ANSER-ARES has moved ahead because of board energy and will continue to grow because of it. We have to reinforce that norm.

An annual conference has been organized each year since 2008 as part of the Congress of Humanities and the Social Sciences. These conferences have been well attended, with at least 100 registrants each year. In addition, a website (<http://www.ANSER-ARES.ca/>) has been established, graduate student awards and thesis awards have been developed.

ANSER-ARES also has an on-line, open-access, peer-reviewed, dual language journal (Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research or ANSER-ARESJ) is in its fifth year. The journal has become very successful and is in its fifth year. During the fall of 2014, we celebrated a milestone - 100,000 individual downloads of published articles! Since then, we have already passed the 125, 000 cap. Important contributions to this success have been the generous time commitment from the editors, Peter Elson and François Brouard, and the book review editors Marcelo Vieta, Luc Thériault and Louise Briand. We also recognize the important administrative support from Mount Royal and the preferred price from the Online Publishing Program at Simon Fraser. We are producing two issues per year. As Peter and François's term comes to an end, J.J. McMurtry will be taking over the role of English editor in the Fall and Martine Vézina as French book review editor.

## Mission

ANSER-ARES has created a Canadian forum for the active and collective exchange of nonprofit and social economy research. Our mission is to build support and service for our members.

ANSER-ARES is a Canadian association for those who have an interest in research that pertains broadly to nonprofit organizations and the social economy and which seeks to promote the development and application of our knowledge for the benefit of Canadians and others in collaboration with those working in the nonprofit organizations and the social economy.

## Vision

ANSER-ARES strives to be a leading Canadian voice and forum for promoting the value and exchange of nonprofit and social economy research.

## Values

ANSER-ARES is guided by values that inform the way we act and the decisions we make:

- collaboration
- respect
- inclusiveness
- quality
- transparency

## Goals

ANSER-ARES is working to:

- build a collaborative community of scholars and researchers; and
- develop a Canadian body of knowledge that encompasses such fields as social enterprise and entrepreneurship, community economic development and organizing, nonprofit management, volunteering, philanthropy, co-operatives, social and environmental accounting, government/voluntary sector relationships, social movements, citizen engagement, and civil society.
- build a membership that embraces a variety of scholarly fields including economics, history, law, business and management, education, psychology, political science, public administration and sociology.
- work collaboratively with other associations with complementary interests and goals.

## Strategic Priorities

1. Create Value Added Services and Support for our Members
2. Enhance communication with members and visibility of ANSER-ARES
3. Strengthen Revenue Streams
4. Enhance our governance structure and administrative capacity to ensure leadership continuity
5. Develop ANSER-ARES'S French services and programs

### **1. Create Value Added Services and Support for our Members**

ANSER-ARES's mission statement is to provide a network for people who have an interest in research that pertains broadly to nonprofit organizations and to the social economy. We believe that we can add value to our members by opening new lines of communication and better utilizing our website in order to share and connect with our members.

The main service we currently offer is organizing the annual conference. The conferences over the past few years each have had registration of about 110. We feel that we have to continue to signal to others that we want ANSER-ARES to be a broad coalition and make researchers feel welcome. Areas for possible expansion are the social economy network in Québec, the community economic development network in Manitoba and other parts of Canada, and researchers in community organizations.

However, we are currently attempting to build a membership base that goes beyond conference attendance. Although some people may want to join for solidarity reasons, most will want services in exchange for the fee.

There is enormous potential to create value added support for our members, largely because the ANSER-ARES website underwent a major overhaul in the winter of 2015. By switching platforms and moving to WordPress, we now have additional features that make it easier to update regularly, and develop new projects. Our website is now attractive, engaging, and easy to navigate for members and visitors. As part of this revamp, our priority in the upcoming year will be creating a repository of learning materials that can be accessed by ANSER-ARES members. The sharing of educational resources will help support effective education on nonprofit organizations and social economy across Canada. We will be working in collaboration with ARNOVA in order to explore the possibility of developing a shared repository that could house case studies and teaching material.

### **2. Enhance Communication with members and Visibility of ANSER-ARES**

Developing a communications strategy and enhancing our visibility will be very important upcoming year. Now that we have a website that we can navigate easily, we need to engage our members more and profile the activities that we are doing. We will be creating a communications committee in order to better sync our website, social media and newsletter communications. This will also enable us to update members on new developments and projects more quickly.

Another area that will be a priority is promoting ANSERJ and increasing the profile of the journal. Our strategy will include profiling some articles on the ANSER-ARES website, in the newsletter and through social media; bringing the attention of the journal to other associations such as ARNOVA; tracking joining a citation index; and registration in the UK.

### **3. Strengthen Revenue Streams**

We are moving ahead but also facing uncertainties. That's true of all organizations and even more so for organizations that aspire to take on new challenges. It is still premature to know whether significant additional income can be raised from memberships apart from the conference. Our past efforts haven't succeeded but by creating more value added for our members beyond the conference, we may be able to reverse the trend.

In 2013-2014, a fundraising committee developed a 5-year fundraising plan for the association that focuses on credit unions, cooperatives, foundations, government agencies, and corporations as potential long-term prospects for support. We were successful in establishing relationships with Alterna Savings & Credit Union for a student award, and with Vancity for conference travel in 2014 and 2015. However, we need to do more to build stronger relationships with stakeholders who could support our operations. For example, this year the fundraising committee was able to secure sponsorship for our conference. We need to continue our efforts.

We also obtained charitable status last year, which has enabled us to offer tax receipts to donors in exchange for charitable donations. We need to make it easier for people to make a donation. As part of our strategic plan, and revamping of the website, we would like to place a donations button on our website. We also need to generate more awareness of our new charitable status so that we can take full advantage of the status in order to strengthen this new revenue stream. With a new communications strategy in place, we will be able to do this.

### **4. Enhance our governance structure and administrative capacity to ensure leadership continuity**

ANSER-ARES is run by its members for its members. Volunteers are an important resource for our organization. As existing board members have moved on, we have had to recruit new people who will maintain a good regional, gender and cultural mix, and even more so to put

energy into the tasks at hand. At the same time, this process represents an opportunity to enhance the transparency and democratic activities of the association.

The Administration Committee continues to work at marketing/outreach strategies to grow the ANSER-ARES membership base. A key part of this strategy is to ensure that special invitations - to faculty, students, nonprofit organizations and governments - are circulated within the region where the annual conference takes place every year. Inviting people to check out ANSER-ARES by attending the conference and then subscribing, is our central strategy at this time.

#### **5. Develop ANSER-ARES's French services and programs**

ANSER-ARES is committed to being a pan-canadian association. We want to make an effort and develop our ties with networks across Canada. A challenge has always been developing linkages within the Francophone communities. We have the opportunity to develop ANSER-ARES's French services and programs over the next three years because we will have four Francophones on the board. Already we have made a significant effort to achieve a better linguistic balance on our website. We translated the newsletters, the AGM minutes from last year and the AGM agenda. However, there is much more that we can do. We should strive to have all our documents translated in French. We will explore the possibility of having our AGM held in both official languages. We will also consult with existing Francophone networks to identify their needs and interests. From there, we will be better equipped to develop French services and programming.