

Local Development
Economic Stability
Aboriginal People
Entrepreneurship
Inclusiveness
Innovation
Youth



Co-operatives:

Solutions to 21st Century Challenges



Co-operatives Secretariat
Secrétariat aux Coopératives



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada

Message from the Honourable Andy Mitchell

There is no question that co-operatives lead by example. Not only do they provide a way to successfully meet the economic and social needs of Canadians, but they are also an effective tool to help the government build a stronger, more inclusive society.

I am pleased to join with the Canadian Co-operative Association and the *Conseil Canadien de la Coopération* to present you with some successful examples of how citizens use the co-operative model to respond to their needs.

As we said in the Speech from the Throne, “Canadian communities of all sizes – whether urban or rural, aboriginal or multicultural – face diverse challenges and have unique needs. The Government of Canada will strive to ensure that, wherever possible, its actions and programs are co-ordinated to help build local solutions to local challenges.”

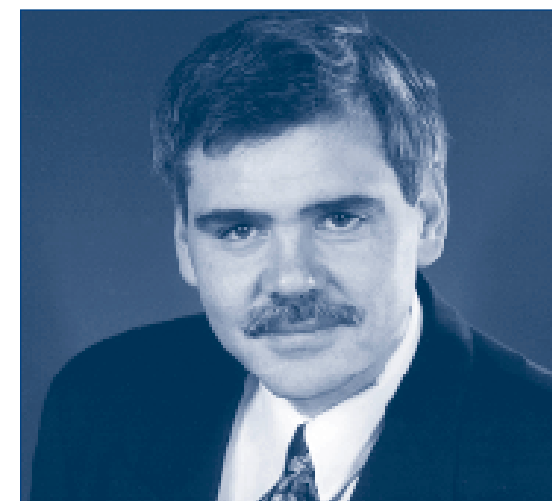
The government provides assistance through a variety of programs, but key to the effectiveness of these programs is that initiatives are community driven and address local issues and priorities. Communities need the capacity to do that.

There is no doubt that one of the tools to build the capacity of communities is co-operatives. They have had proven success in bringing economic and social benefits to communities and providing a means for community development.

I have seen the significant role that co-operatives play in rural development, whether by providing needed services, creating and maintaining local enterprises and jobs, or enhancing rural amenities.

I believe that the key to success for community development is a grassroots, bottom-up approach. The co-operative model exemplifies this approach because co-operatives are a form of organization that empowers people to take charge of their own future and destiny.

While co-operatives are an excellent model for community development, they are also central in providing needed services to communities. Whether it's a credit union or a *caisse populaire* providing financial services, a day care providing affordable child care, an energy co-operative distributing electricity and gas in communities, or a farmer co-operative supplying, marketing or processing agricultural products, co-operatives are getting



the job done. They have also been pro-active in moving to new areas of services such as home care, recycling or car sharing to respond to changing demographics and needs, as well as technology and innovation.

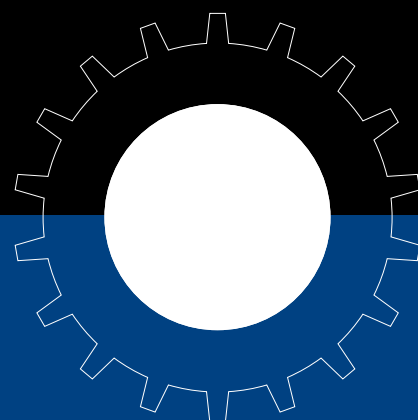
The Speech from the Throne of February 2001, also stated: “Economic and social success must be pursued together. We cannot build a prosperous society in the absence of economic growth. We cannot lead in innovation and new ideas without healthy and secure citizens.”

The co-operative spirit embodies well the Canadian Way and I am convinced that the co-operative model has its place in the development of the new economy, an economy based on research and investment, knowledge and innovation.

I see co-ops as a modern model of inclusive social and economic community development. I believe that they hold enormous potential to help our communities deliver the services they require, facilitate community adaptation, and help people to capture the opportunities and face the challenges of the 21st century.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Mitchell'.

SECRETARY OF STATE (RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO)



“Co-operatives have had proven success in bringing economic and social benefits to communities and providing a means for community development.”



Co-operatives: Finding Local Solutions to Local Challenges

Community co-operatives and similar organizations help communities to adjust to economic or social change and to plan for the future. They take a community economic development approach, bringing partners together within a democratic structure to determine issues and challenges, to assess assets, to identify opportunities, and to develop and implement a community strategy.

Working Together to Make a Difference

In Saskatoon, the Quint Development Corporation undertakes an integrated series of initiatives to improve the social and economic well-being of five core neighbourhoods. It provides opportunities for training and employment, affordable housing and small business development. Working in collaboration with all three levels of government and business and community partners, the Quint Development Corporation has created local co-operatives to help them accomplish their aims in serving the core neighbourhoods.

Did you know that...

La coopérative de producteurs de sirop d'érable Citadelle is the no.1 processing and marketing business of maple products in the world. It accounts for one third of the world maple production.

One of these, the Bent Nail Tool Co-operative, works to promote home maintenance and renovation skills, encourage self-sufficiency and increase the economic potential of its members. Participation in the Co-operative provides members with access to tools, skills, facilities and mutual support. Benefits, however, go far beyond the members to the community at large, as whole neighbourhoods are rejuvenated.

The Quint Development Corporation has also partnered with the Saskatoon Credit Union to manage part of a micro-loan fund for small enterprises (with funding from Western Economic Diversification) and to provide entrepreneurial training.

Keeping Jobs in the Community

The Cowichan Lake Community Forest Co-operative in British Columbia is an example of a co-operative that was formed to respond to the loss of employment due to changing conditions in a resource-based industry; in this case, forestry. For several years, the co-operative structure has allowed the community to manage its forestry resources in a way that creates and maintains employment, that takes a responsible approach to the environment, and that enables local residents to become involved in the planning, care and use of the resources in their area.

Unfortunately, the large private local sawmill closed in 2001, and logs must now be trucked out of the area for processing. The Co-operative is trying to negotiate a new agreement with potential processing plants, with a focus on keeping the logs and the jobs local. Other avenues being explored include the establishment of a specialty mill and the development of a product that utilizes logs currently considered scrap. The Cowichan experience demonstrates that while co-operatives cannot always control conditions in the wider economy, the co-operative model provides a stable and inclusive forum for generating ideas and capturing creative solutions, and planning for the future with the means at hand.

Co-operatives: Where Anyone Can Belong

Globalization of the economy, societal trends, institutional changes; these and other well-documented hallmarks of modern life are all having an impact on individuals, families and communities. The new economy presents new opportunities for growth. At the same time, new social arrangements and increased mobility are changing the definition of community.

In this new context, a number of people are feeling excluded from the mainstream economy and from society in general. This is where co-operatives fit. Co-operatives exist to meet the economic and social needs of their members. They are member owned and democratically controlled. They are empowering organizations that encourage voluntary help and that foster leadership skills development. They help to ensure accessibility of services for hard-to-reach people and are a stable source of jobs. In short, co-operatives promote social cohesion and inclusiveness.

But this housing co-operative is more than a home, it is a vibrant community. The Bleecker Street Co-operative Homes did not take long to evolve from its role of housing provider and to expand to offer educational, health and social programs. Today, its members have access to healthy lifestyle workshops, computer classes, Internet access, English as a second language tutorials, a scholarship fund, etc. The Bleecker Street Co-operative Homes also organizes social events to encourage interaction among its diverse membership and to break down barriers between groups that normally may not interact.

The Bleecker Street Co-operative Homes was recognized for its success at the Annual General Meeting of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada), winning both the Award for Management Excellence from the Federal Co-operative Housing Stabilization Fund and CHF Canada's own Jim MacDonald Award for Social Change.

It is with a lot of pride that in 2001, members of the Bleecker Street Co-operative Homes are celebrating the "ten years of love" that have nurtured the co-operative where they live, work and grow.

Did you know that...

across Canada, more than 2,100 non-profit housing co-operatives house 250,000 people in 90,000 households. There are housing co-operatives in every province and territory.

Blecker Street Co-operative Homes is More Than a Place to Live

The board, staff and members have worked hard together to develop a community that is inclusive, diverse and progressive. Over the past ten years, the Bleecker Street Co-operative Homes have provided affordable and safe housing to people of many cultures and family compositions.

“With its 254 housing units, Blecker Street Co-operative Homes is the home of about 500 people in downtown Toronto.”

For more information, visit their web site at www.bleecker-street.com

Co-operative Entrepreneurship

Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative Ltd. Committing to Immigrants

Picture yourself arriving in a new country, adjusting to a new environment, learning a new language and soaking in some of the culture around you to fit in. Inability to communicate becomes a barrier to getting the help newcomers need, causing isolation and vulnerability to a variety of health and social issues.

When a group of immigrant women formed the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative Ltd. (MHBC), they understood the difficulties immigrants are facing and their needs.

The uniqueness of MCHB is that it was formed to serve culturally diverse communities, and to gain access to health services and social supports within the context of their language and culture. The worker members are mostly foreign-trained professionals such as medical doctors, nurses, social workers, computer analysts, graphic artists, and teachers. The MCHB offers social, emotional and informational support to

Did you know that...

in the north, co-operatives are the most important employer, after government.

immigrant and cultural minority families. It also provides prenatal education, parenting classes, hospital tours, support groups and community development projects. An integral part of the MCHB is support for policy development. Various organizations and health institutions contact the MCHB for their input in hospital policies and cross-cultural health issues.

What makes the MCHB a success? It plays a large role in preventive medicine, in-home recovery, and providing people with the required services outside the hospitals, along with its role to communicate effectively with the newcomers in their own languages.

As community-based and democratically-controlled organizations, co-operatives can help tackle the socio-economic challenges of our modern society. By providing a framework that is inherent to co-operation, co-operatives nurture the spirit of collective entrepreneurship and citizen engagement. Collective entrepreneurship empowers enterprises to compete in the global economy.

The Role of Small Businesses and Co-operative Businesses in Community Economic Development

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation recently released a research report, "The Role of Small Businesses and Co-operative Businesses in Community Economic Development." The research was funded by the Rural Secretariat (under the Canadian Rural Partnership program) and by the Co-operatives Secretariat.

A comparative analysis between small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and co-operatives in rural communities revealed some interesting findings. In a comparison of the growth patterns of sales and employment for co-operatives and SMEs, more of the co-operatives experienced growth in sales and employment in the past three years. Co-operative board members were more likely to volunteer their time than SME owners/managers. In fact, co-operative members contribute almost twice as many hours of volunteer work in the community, compared to SME owners/managers.

Assiniboine Credit Union

The Assiniboine Credit Union has nine branches in Winnipeg, 50,000 members and over \$500 million in assets.

In 1995, the Assiniboine Credit Union created a Community Loan Centre (CLC) that became the focal point for Community Economic Development (CED) loans and services. By the end of 2000, the

Community Loan Centre had provided \$23 million in lines of credit and loans to about 400 businesses and non-profit members.

In addition, the Assiniboine Credit Union in collaboration with Seed Winnipeg Inc., an independent non-profit agency that also supports micro-enterprise development, issued 150 loans totalling \$482,000 to low-income micro-entrepreneurs.

The Assiniboine Credit Union began working with other partners in Winnipeg to develop the Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program. The program became operational in 1999 through a contract between the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) and Western Economic Diversification (WD). As a result, six new businesses opened that are owned and operated by entrepreneurs with disabilities.

In 1999, the Assiniboine Credit Union designed a Co-operative Business Development Pilot Project. It facilitates business-to-business mentorship, training and technical assistance to emerging or expanding co-operatives.

In 2000, the Assiniboine Credit Union received the Community Economic Development Award (CEDA) awarded by the Credit Union Central of Canada. It also received the Exceptional Business Award (2001), presented by the Manitoba Settlement Group to Manitoba businesses that are supportive of immigrant employees.

Through their Community Loan Centre, the Assiniboine Credit Union embodies the spirit of the credit union philosophy "people helping people"; whether through their direct financial assistance or working with community partners or just giving their credit union expertise.



“As an economic arm of the social organization, co-operatives transform themselves into perfect partners of democratic governments in an effort to build social justice, to share the wealth, to defend and protect the environment and to ensure food safety and employment for everyone.”

ROBERTO RODRIGUES, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE



“Is the co-operative way still relevant for us today? My answer to you is a resounding yes. Empowerment never goes out of style. And that’s what co-operative retailing is all about. It’s about having a voice in decision-making.

It’s about families taking control of their social and economic destiny.

It’s about strengthening and preserving communities. It’s about attractive facilities, good products and excellent service. It’s about people helping people.”

DENNIS BANDA, PRESIDENT-CHAIR, FEDERATED CO-OPERATIVES LTD.

VanCity Credit Union

Since 1946, Vancouver City Savings Credit Union (VanCity) has grown into a dynamic, innovative and profitable co-operative while remaining committed to environmental and socially responsible values.

VanCity is Canada’s largest credit union with 271,000 members and \$7 billion in assets. The organization has 39 branches in British Columbia in Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley and Victoria.

VanCity’s mission is to be a democratic, ethical, and innovative provider of financial services. Through strong financial performance, the credit union aims to serve as a catalyst for the self-reliance and economic well being of its members and community.

As part of this commitment, VanCity maintains an impressive and expanding array of awards, grants, scholarships and loan programs ranging from environmental projects to the recognition of sound business ethics.

One of its most recent initiatives is The VanCity Award. This is an annual \$1- million award earmarked for a BC-based non-profit organization to support bold, innovative and long-lasting

Did you know that...

over 3,500 communities in Canada are served by credit unions and *caisses populaires*; in over 900 of these locations, they are the only financial service providers.

projects in the communities VanCity serves. The first recipient of the VanCity Award will be decided through a membership voting process in fall 2001.

In addition to its community work, VanCity has continued to be a viable and profitable financial institution. It has kept up with new trends and technologies in the financial sector and continues to offer full-service brokerage, telephone banking, Internet banking, insurance and estate planning. It also wholly owns Citizens Bank of Canada, a national branchless bank with corporate social responsibility as its cornerstone.

For all of the social initiatives of VanCity, the organization remains a profitable enterprise, returning 29% of surplus to its members in 2000.

Bakery Employees Investing in Their Future

In 1998 when he was retiring, the owner of the pie-making firm Au Royaume de la Tarte in the city of Québec offered his employees an opportunity to buy the business collectively. Liking their jobs and working conditions, the employees decided to purchase the firm and create a worker co-operative. Since then, sales have risen from \$1.1 million to \$2.1 million and the number of employees has grown from 25 to 38. They have also added a sales outlet and extended their distribution network. Worker members say they are happy with this formula, which lets them develop their business sense by taking part in the management of the business while at the same time exercising control over the direction in which the co-operative is headed. Future plans include modernizing the firm, stepping up production, reorganizing the workplace and developing a distribution network in supermarkets such as IGA, Métro and Maxi.

Mountain Equipment Co-op Celebrating 30 Years of Success

In the late 1960s, there was a lack of outdoor equipment stores in Vancouver. Tired of making cross-border trips to Seattle, a few outdoor enthusiasts decided to pool their resources. They created their own outdoor equipment store, Mountain Equipment Co-op, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2001. In the beginning, only

Did you know that...

Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) annually sets aside 0.4% of its sales to fund environmental projects. In 2001, MEC has allocated \$590,000.

mountain climbing, ski touring, rock climbing and hiking equipment were offered and products were available only through mail order. Now, Mountain Equipment Co-op has locations in Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax and over one million members.

Part of what distinguishes Mountain Equipment Co-op from other retailers is its commitment to social and environmental values. When purchasing goods, Mountain Equipment Co-op favours Canadian businesses which use environmentally sound practices. In cases where there are no Canadian sources, Mountain Equipment Co-op chooses factories that meet their level of business ethics and integrity.

“Mountain Equipment Co-op constructs its stores using “green” building techniques. The heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems use the latest techniques in energy efficiency.”

Also, Mountain Equipment Co-op constructs its stores using “green” building techniques. The heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems use the latest techniques in energy efficiency. It uses water facilities that have low water consumption. It provides increased green space in its parking lots. The Ottawa store is in fact the first retail building in Canada to meet the government’s C2000 objective of using only half the energy of conventional buildings. This balance of sound business practices and social and environmental responsibility has made the Mountain Equipment Co-op a great success in Canadian retailing.



Co-operatives Thrive in Aboriginal Communities

The Aboriginal way of life has always been based on a strong collective commitment. Aboriginal peoples also see their own economic development closely tied to a collective approach. The collective approach ensures that Aboriginal values, identities and self governance are all respected.

The co-operative model is a collective approach that suits well the socio-economic development of Aboriginal communities. The predominance of the co-operative system in the north is a clear example of its success.

Co-operatives are a Viable Form of Business in Aboriginal Communities

Today there are 137 Aboriginal co-operatives in Canada. Seventy-four of them that reported to the 1999 annual survey on Canadian co-operatives have over 23,000 members and pay salaries and wages of almost \$40 million.

Aboriginal co-operatives are involved in general merchandise retailing, hotels, taxi and transport services, commercial fisheries, housing, bakeries and cable television services. As reflected in Figure 1, the real volume of business of Aboriginal co-operatives doubled between 1987 and 1999, reaching almost \$240 million in 1999. Even during the economic turmoil of the 1990s, there was only one slight decrease in the volume of business between 1990 and 1991, indicating the solid success of Aboriginal co-operatives in their communities.

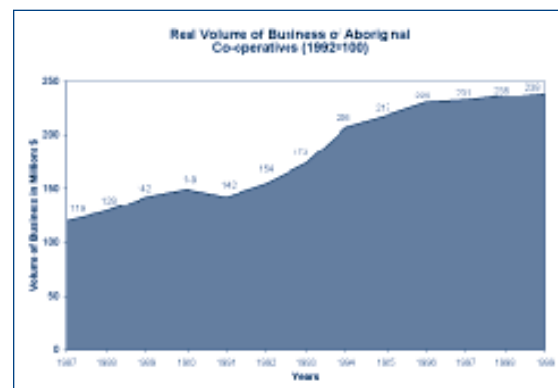


Figure 1

Co-operatives are a Key Instrument for Northern Development

Northern Aboriginal co-operatives remain very competitive in the retail sector where their sales increased consistently between 1993 and 1999. During this period, Aboriginal co-operatives recorded an average annual growth rate in their retail sales of 7.3%, compared with 4.9% for Canada.



Figure 2

Arctic Co-operative Development Fund

The Arctic Co-operative Business Development Fund (ACDF) is a pool of capital owned and controlled by the co-operative system. It assists member co-operatives to attain and to maintain financial stability and operational growth. Since its inception, the ACDF has provided over \$230 million in financing to its member-owners. Since 1986, the ACDF has returned 60% (or \$8.7 million) of the interest paid by members as patronage refunds. These refunds help to create wealth in the communities because the interest would have been lost had the money been borrowed elsewhere.



“Even early on, I could see the co-operative model offered the opportunity for local residents to own a business and to have input in its direction. It gives ordinary people — who have no experience operating a business — a chance to receive the benefits of local ownership. That’s not only democratic and empowering, it’s also very practical for community development as a whole.”

BILL LYALL, PRESIDENT OF ARCTIC CO-OPERATIVES LIMITED

The Fund is very active at the community level; in the year 2000, it provided leadership development to member co-operatives, as well as support to create new co-operatives in six northern communities. Presently, the fund is working on a pilot project that will provide banking access in small communities throughout the Northwest Territories, with possibilities to expand into Nunavut in the future.

the neighbourhood by marketing moccasins and other home-made crafts made by Aboriginal people. Another notable achievement is the positive influence it has had on the health of the neighbourhood children. The Neechi Foods Community Store sells at cost “kids only” fruit baskets as a replacement for candy bars. The co-operative does not sell cigarettes.

Neechi Foods Community Store has also developed partnerships with several community organizations such as schools, youth centres and clinics. These relationships are based on, but not limited to, promoting nutritious foods, such as the wild rice harvested by another Aboriginal co-operative, and providing food sales for initiatives like school meal programs. Neechi Foods Community Store also educates members of the community by offering a wide selection of books on child rearing, peace education and community economic development.

Neechi Foods Co-op Limited is currently pursuing a pilot project, supported by the Assiniboine Credit Union, which will focus on developing human resources skills and employee and organizational strengths within the operation. This project would serve as a model to be used by other co-operatives to develop human resources.

Did you know that...

4 out of 10 Canadians are members of at least one co-operative.

Neechi Foods Community Store, an Aboriginal Community Store

Located in Winnipeg, Neechi Foods Community Store is an Aboriginal worker co-operative. As part of its commitment to community development, it has generated further employment in

Co-operatives: A Source of Economic Stability

Globalization and technological changes combined with governments' efforts to control public spending, have had an impact on how the social needs of citizens are being met.



These needs include adequate health care, a clean environment, affordable shelter and secure jobs. Today, the need for socially responsible enterprises is pressing. Co-operative enterprises can meet the challenge. They last longer than traditional businesses, provide stable jobs to citizens, lock capital into the community, have a democratic ownership, are accountable to the community, and capture the economic benefits that may not work in the market model.

Employment Growth

Co-operatives have always been sensitive to socio-economic problems such as unemployment. They are doing their share to mitigate this problem. As depicted in Figure 3, co-operatives show a higher growth rate of employment than the Canadian economy in general. While co-operatives employed 62% more people in 1999 than in 1984, employment in Canada increased only 28% over the same period.

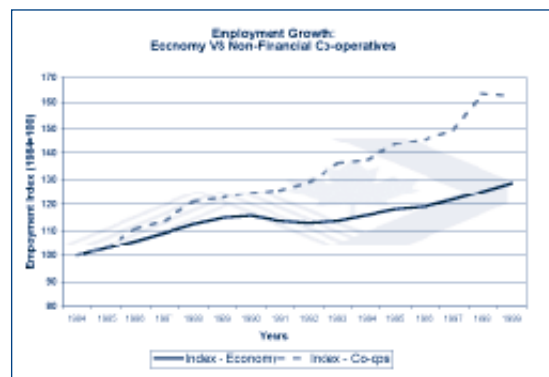


Figure 3

The co-operative model is durable

Survival Rates of Co-operatives	5 years	10 years	Long term
All Co-operatives	64%	46%	30%
Private Sector Companies (Statistics Canada)	36%	20%	N/A
Manufacturing Businesses (Research Institute on SME (UQTR))	47%	30%	N/A

Source: "Direction des coopératives": Quebec Ministry of Industry and Commerce

A recent study by the Government of Québec indicates that, overall, co-operatives last almost twice as long as other private businesses (64% compared to 36% for other forms of business after 5 years). This higher survival rate is further evidence of the stability co-operatives bring to the Canadian economy.

The Fund, which received \$1.9 million in funding under Human Resources Development Canada's Research and Innovation Program, will support 16 worker co-operative projects and will create 128 jobs. The Fund will make investments in priority areas of government such as youth, trade and technology.

The Fund has already committed a total of \$410,000 to five investment projects that will create or maintain 40 jobs in five sectors:

- aquaculture
- forest mushroom cultivation
- newsmagazine
- food processing
- distribution of restaurant equipment.

Another goal of the Fund is to establish a network of worker co-operative developers and as of August 2001, 42 people have been certified as members of the network. For more information, see the CWCF's web site, www.workercoop.ca

Did you know that...

25% of the co-operatives that incorporated between 1996 and 2000 were worker co-operatives.

Worker Co-op Fund Creating Lasting Employment

The Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation (CWCF) is always looking for innovative ways to support worker co-operatives. Through the creation of the Worker Co-operative Fund in the fall of 2000, the CWCF is testing the concept of a self-sustaining fund to support the establishment and the maintenance of worker co-operatives across Canada.

The Fund will make investments in priority areas of government such as youth, trade and technology.

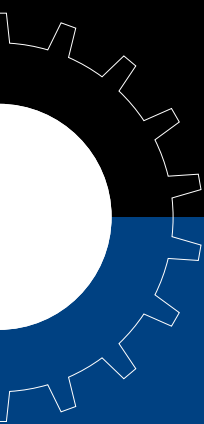
Did you know that...

the survival rate of co-operative enterprises is almost twice that of investor-owned companies based on a recent study on Quebec co-operatives.



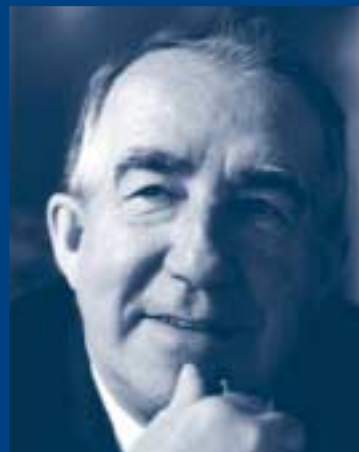
“The essential secret of a successful co-operative is its ability to satisfy its members' specific and common needs. When the fit between need and service is tight, the co-operative flourishes.”

TERESA MACNEIL, FORMER DIRECTOR OF EXTENSION,
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY AND FORMER BOARD MEMBER OF CCA



“Sometimes, people ask what makes co-operatives different from other forms of collective action. The differences are numerous; however, for me, the distinction is based on a simple formula; co-operatives create and distribute wealth in a different way.” (translation)

PAUL MASSICOTTE, CO-CHAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CO-OPERATIVES
PRESIDENT, CONSEIL CANADIEN DE LA COOPÉRATION,
PRESIDENT, COOPÉRATIVE FÉDÉRÉE DE QUÉBEC



Co-operatives: Helping Communities Adapt to the Future

Many small communities face a range of social and economic challenges such as municipal restructuring, business closures, decline of certain resource-based industries and unemployment. These challenges create a need for adaptation at the local level. The co-operative model is one tool which communities can use to organize themselves to undertake projects in the interest of the total community and to adjust to new economic realities. Successful examples of co-operatives show how citizens, by working together, can change their destiny. They might need to struggle and make sacrifices, but the results are worth the effort.

Fogo Island Co-operative Society: Getting the Communities Back on Their Feet

In 1965, Fogo Island, Newfoundland was facing a crisis. It had ten fragmented communities with 5,000 residents and 60 per cent were on social assistance. Their numerous problems were compounded when the major fish merchant abandoned Fogo Island. At this time, the government of Newfoundland was implementing a “resettlement program” to relocate ailing communities to “growth” centres in different parts of the province. Fogo Island’s survival was in doubt.

At the same time, the federal government was launching an initiative to address poverty. Part of the plan was to enlist the help of the National Film Board (NFB) to document cases of poverty. During the summer of 1967, the NFB made 28 films documenting the problems facing residents all over Newfoundland. The NFB held 35 screenings of the films on Fogo Island and almost half of the residents viewed the films. When the residents of Fogo Island saw the films, they realized that their problems were not isolated and that much of Newfoundland faced similar challenges.

Open discussion followed and it led to the formation of the Fogo Island Shipbuilders and Producers Co-operative Society Limited (later



renamed the Fogo Island Co-operative Society Limited after the phasing out of the shipbuilding sector).

The Society initially focused on the construction of a fleet of larger vessels. Today, it concentrates on the processing of numerous species of fish. It employs 200 to 250 workers and serves over 500 fishers on a seasonal basis.

The Fogo Island Co-operative Society Limited has become the focus of the economy on Fogo Island, adapting to changes in the marketplace and creating new markets for itself. The Society handles between \$15 million and \$20 million in fish products a year, exporting to the United States, Japan, Taiwan, Sweden and Germany. It operates five seafood processing plants and has pioneered quality initiatives in the industry

through dockside product grading systems. Its leadership was recognized in 2001 at the 17th annual Newfoundland and Labrador Export Awards when it received the Goods Export Award for the second time. Today, thanks to the Co-op Society, the economy of Fogo Island is in much better shape than during the low point of the 1960s, with social assistance now practically non-existent and the prospects for the future looking promising.

Muskoka Community Co-operatives Bringing the Community Together

In the Muskoka area of Ontario, Muskoka Community Co-operatives initially brought people together over the issue of municipal restructuring, which was causing some of the smaller communities to lose their voice as they were incorporated into regionalized government structures. The Co-operatives work in partnership with other local agencies and groups to help ensure the provision of needed services and the retention of community assets. They are action oriented and their accomplishments cover a broad range — from the establishment of a farmers' market to the development of a youth centre, to the publication of promotional

Did you know that...

Co-op Atlantic is the second largest regional co-operative wholesaler in Canada with a membership of 136 co-operative enterprises. Co-op Atlantic stores serve over 200,000 member families in Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

brochures. In 2001, the Co-operatives became a local delivery agent for Industry Canada's Community Access Program to provide local residents with affordable public access to the Internet.

When citing the elements that lead to success, the Muskoka Community Co-operatives point to their broad structure and mandate, their stability and continuity due to incorporation, and the democratic process and community consultation. They have found that the co-operative model promotes member participation, inclusiveness, self-determination, vision for the future and learning.

Looking to the Future

Canada is continually challenged to excel in productivity and innovation so that its citizens can maintain the quality of life they currently enjoy. One example of these challenges is the knowledge-based economy driven by interconnectivity, information technology and service innovations.

Like other businesses, co-operatives are directly exposed to the realities of this new economy and have shown that they can successfully meet the challenges by innovating to better serve the needs and interests of their members and their communities. Co-operatives have not only kept abreast of rapid technological and market change, but have actually embraced modern trends, positioning themselves as leaders in certain sectors.

Seaway Valley Farmers Energy Co-operative Inc. Investing in a Healthy Environment

Based in Eastern Ontario, Seaway Valley Farmers Energy Co-operative Inc., a farmer-owned and -operated co-operative of 2,400 farmers, as well as farming organizations and businesses, will soon be adding value to corn production. The Co-operative is constructing a \$48 million ethanol production plant which will process 6.5 million bushels of corn per year into 66 million litres of ethanol for use in fuel and non-fuel applications. The Co-operative will produce a renewable, corn-based product that offers environmental benefits. This initiative, which is funded in part by Natural Resources Canada under their Efficiency and Alternative Energy Program, is the result of extensive technical and market development work and is a positive step toward the development of a renewable energy industry in Canada.

Did you know that...

in 1998, Canada's co-operatives had assets of \$160 billion.

Co-operative Research Farms Creating Opportunities Through Research and Development

The Co-operative Research Farms (CRF) are an excellent example of an innovative, international research network that was created to foster animal feed research and to enhance farm profitability. The CRF is owned by seven feed manufacturing co-operatives, including three Canadian co-operatives; Co-op Atlantic, the *Coopérative fédérée de Québec* and Federated Co-operatives Limited. Members of the CRF have worked together for over 47 years, conducting livestock and poultry nutrition and management related research for the benefit of their farmer-owners. Through the pooling of human and financial resources, the members and their affiliates have access to state-of-the-art information.

For more information, visit the CRF web site, www.crfarms.org

Canadian Agricultural Co-operatives Plan for the Future

Leaders of Canadian agricultural co-operatives have spent the last 12 months exploring with agricultural producers new ways to improve farming profitability. This was undertaken with the support of the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund (CARD) of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Through research activities, regional forums and a national symposium, agricultural producers discussed issues of concern to specific regions, and critical barriers to sustainability and growth. They also explored ways in which they can adapt to the changing agricultural sector environment in Canada.

The concrete outcome is the action plan which is going to be used to strengthen the competitiveness of existing co-operative businesses and to stimulate new co-operative growth within the agriculture and agri-food sector. The action plan aims to improve the sustainability of individual producers and to strengthen the economic growth of rural communities. Strategies within the action plan include proposals for potential government/co-operative sector partnerships to support the development of new generation co-operatives. The action plan also identifies four key theme areas to be addressed: promoting new market development; addressing capitalization challenges; improving governance through leadership development; and investing in skills and building capacity for new agricultural co-operative development.

This initiative is a prime example of how the sector and the government can work together to build capacity for co-operative enterprise development and to support innovation.

Did you know that...

the first automated teller machine (ATM) was introduced by a credit union in Saskatchewan.

Canada's Credit Unions and *Caisses Populaires* Embracing Innovation

Canada's credit unions and *caisses populaires* are at the forefront of the financial industry by innovating and investing in product development. They were among the first to install automated teller machines (ATMs) and they have been leaders in the provision of direct payroll deposit services in Ontario, debit cards in Saskatchewan, telephone banking in British Columbia and on-line banking in Quebec.

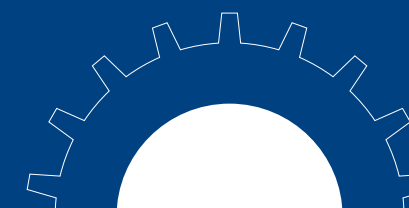
Arctic Co-operatives Limited Connecting Northern Communities to the World Through ARDICOM

Arctic Co-operatives Limited (ACL) entered into a joint venture with NorthwestTel and Northern Aboriginal Services Company (NASCO) to create ARDICOM Digital Communications Inc. in response to the Government of the Northwest Territories' request for proposals to design, to implement and to operate a high-speed, two-way digital communications network. Today, thanks to ARDICOM, all 58 communities of Northern Canada are connected to the Digital Communications Network (DCN). The DCN is an advanced and robust frame relay network provided mostly by satellite. Northern communities now have access to the latest communications technology such as video conferencing, the Internet, telemedicine and telehealth applications, training, education, high speed data transfers, and interactive multimedia applications. ARDICOM not only provides new community-based business opportunities but also reduces the cost and improves the delivery of government services.



“Co-operatives have a long-standing affinity for innovation to serve community needs and requirements. After all, the co-operative business form is itself an innovative adaptation of the traditional corporate model. Co-operative leaders know that co-operative success in the twenty-first century will continue to require innovation—whether through the formation of new types of co-operatives or existing co-operatives employing creative and dynamic ways of serving their members’ needs. Innovative partnerships and government collaboration will ensure a thriving co-op sector to service communities and members in a fair and democratic structure.”

GLEN TULLY, PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF FEDERATED CO-OPERATIVES LIMITED



Car Sharing Co-operatives: A Way to Save Money, Reduce Pollution and Traffic Congestion

In the past several years car sharing co-operatives have started in Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton and Victoria and are proving to be a noteworthy alternative to car ownership. Co-operative Auto Network (CAN) started a few years ago as a low cost alternative to car ownership. Essentially members pay for a share purchase registration fee and then pay per use of the car. They are free to book a car whenever, wherever and for however long. The cars are strategically placed in parking lots around the city. CAN has created many benefits for its members and the community. Members save money and use alternative forms of transportation more

often. They do not have the stress of car payments, insurance payments, or gas and maintenance costs. The community and the environment benefit because there are fewer cars on the road and less pollution. Car sharing improves access to cars for people of all levels of income.

For more information on CAN, visit its web site at www.cooperativeauto.net

Did you know that...

Calgary Co-operative Association Limited is the largest retail co-operative in North America.



Co-operatives: A Value-Added Tool in the 21st Century

Co-operatives have long played an important role in agricultural and rural communities by meeting the economic and social needs of citizens. Today, the agriculture and agri-food industry faces new challenges and producers have the opportunity to look at new and innovative strategies and different organizational structures to add value to their traditional farm products.

“Co-operative enterprise, where ownership is vested in the community, creates an economic environment that is conducive to stability and sustainability. Communities of people, with a common interest or purpose, are able to set priorities, direct the enterprise, and share in its benefits.”

BILL TURNER, CO-CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CO-OPERATIVES AND PAST PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

The co-operative model, particularly New Generation Co-operatives, can help achieve this added value. The co-operative model makes it possible for producers to be more competitive, by allowing them to act collectively, either by pooling their purchases to reduce the cost of inputs or by establishing joint ventures to market their products and to provide added value. The pooling of financial resources helps producers to enter the production of value-added products, which offer better returns and have a beneficial impact on communities in terms of jobs and income. As we look ahead, co-operatives will

continue to provide producers with a valuable business model that will help improve their well-being. They will also be even more instrumental in developing rural regions where they supply needed services and help build self-sufficient communities.

Farm Fresh Poultry Co-op: From Chicken Coop to Chicken Co-op

Jim Judge, President of Farm Fresh Poultry Co-op, did not know he would be “starting a co-op from scratch” when he met with a group of Newmarket-area chicken producers in the spring of 1995. They were tossing around the idea of starting a co-operative to process their chickens and they needed Jim Judge because of his co-operative experience.

Most of the producers jumped at the opportunity to develop a chicken-processing facility as a co-operative. “I was amazed at the interest shown at that meeting. We were able to put something together that just blossomed by itself,” Judge recalls.

Today, they have one of Ontario’s first “new generation” co-operatives. Farm Fresh Poultry Co-op, located in Harriston, Ontario just north of Listowel, produces high-quality poultry from the birds of its 40 members. Labelled “Air Chill Chicken,” it can be found in premium butcher and meat shops in the Greater Toronto area.

“The chicken business is a good business,” notes George Alkalay, a consultant who worked with the chicken producers on this project. “But in some years, producers do well and in other years, processors do well.” Farm Fresh Poultry Co-op is

built on the theory that the producers can diversify their sources of income by controlling the processing and profit from the economic value that processing adds to the birds they raise.

It certainly did not take very long for these poultry farmers to make an impression on the market. In October 1997, just two years after their initial meeting, the producers bought a 4,000 square-foot facility in Harriston. This facility has grown to more than 24,000 square feet through which the 40 members provide 750,000 kg of chickens every eight weeks.

Co-operation has also increased product variety. Farm Fresh Poultry Co-op is one of the first Ontario providers of Cornish hens.

As Farm Fresh moves toward being “fairly profitable,” the rewards are more than just financial. In Jim Judge’s words, “It’s good to see producers step beyond their role as just producers and start to control their product beyond the farm gate.”

“Farm Fresh Poultry Co-op is one of the first Ontario providers of Cornish hens.”

Mornington Heritage Cheese and Dairy Co-operative Inc.

Mornington Heritage Cheese and Dairy Cooperative Inc. was established to carry on a 100-year tradition of quality cheese making in Perth County, Ontario, but with a new taste! Goat cheese!

It was the closing of a 100 year old cheese factory in Millbank that brought together a small group of non-farming rural residents and farm families to work toward a common goal; helping each other. They all recognized the importance of keeping the local control of food processing within the community and selling directly to the consumers to maintain employment and to promote the well-being of citizens.

The Mornington Heritage Cheese and Dairy Cooperative Inc. is seeking to establish a manufacturing facility to produce quality goat cheese to add value to farmers’ goat milk. As of 2001, the Co-operative has attracted 25 producer members and 60 community investors and produces 12 specialty cheeses as well as various dairy products at a leased facility in Seaforth. The co-operative’s goal is to build market share as it works towards building its own plant.

Information on New Generation Co-operatives Available Online

The University of Manitoba’s Department of Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics has launched a web site that helps interested parties apply the lessons learned from the experience in the United States to new generation co-operative development efforts here in Canada. The web site provides information on the development of New Generation Co-operatives (NGCs) in the northern United States. Funding for the project has been provided by the Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative, a program sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Manitoba Agriculture and Food to provide grants for research and development in Manitoba’s agricultural and agri-food sectors.

The web site can be accessed under the University of Manitoba’s Department of Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics, located at:
www.umanitoba.ca/afs/agric_economics/ardi/

Did you know that...

co-operatives handle 40% of farm cash receipts

Co-operatives: Building Tomorrow's Leaders

The co-operative movement recognizes the importance of investing in the education of young people, the new generation of leaders. It also recognizes the necessity of creating a dynamic learning community around co-operative knowledge and issues.

To achieve these goals, co-operators provide opportunities such as youth forums and electronic discussion groups where young people can familiarize themselves with co-operative practices, values and principles. Co-operators also create other opportunities such as internships where young people can gain experience. Through their involvement in co-operative activities, young people have the chance to broaden their horizons, to develop their initiative and to acquire transferable leadership skills and knowledge.

This project aims to undertake targeted promotion and communication with co-operatives and credit unions to engage them in employing young people in meaningful career track positions. A significant gap existed in promoting, within the co-operative sector, long-term career opportunities for students. This site supports co-operative employers with information and services that will help them to hire young people in career track positions. The co-operative career web site (www.coopcareer.com) addresses these challenges by allowing co-operatives to advertise career opportunities and also by providing young people access to a list of available jobs.

By providing employment opportunities, this project gives young people exposure to the co-operative experience while building the future of the co-operative movement.

1800 Young Quebecers Start Their Own Co-operatives

Over the summer of 2001, 1,800 young Quebecers joined one of 119 youth service co-operatives (CJS), and the *Regroupement Québécois des coopérateurs et coopératrices de travail* actually expects the number of such co-operatives to rise to 150 in the summer of 2002.

The primary goal of youth service co-operatives is to provide young people with a setting conducive to learning about the exercising of democratic

power, collective business management and the realities of the working world. Quality of learning is strongly influenced by the co-operative teaching approach employed in the project. In contributing to a youth service co-operative, young people develop their sense of personal and mutual responsibility, solidarity, motivation and a true understanding of the usefulness of what they are learning.

Each co-operative is made up of 12 to 15 young people between the ages of 14 and 17. Together they take on the challenge of setting up a co-operative business in order to create jobs for themselves in their community. They offer many services locally (generally odd jobs).

The young people themselves set up a co-operative decision-making structure and assign the duties and responsibilities associated with the management of their co-operative and the services they opt to make available in their community, thus reaping the benefits of practical and intensive training in collective entrepreneurship.

For more information, visit the youth service co-operatives Web site at www.rqcct.org/cjs (French only).

Young People Gain Valuable Work Experience and Exposure to International Development

Youth Experience International (YEI) is a program offered by the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA). Funding and support are available from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) as part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy.

The goal of the program is to assist young people in the transition from post-secondary education to long-term employment as well as to provide them with a unique opportunity to acquire invaluable professional and personal experience within the co-operative movement. The work placements are designed to broaden the intern's awareness of the global economy, to develop

“Each co-operative is made up of 12 to 15 young people between the ages of 14 and 17. Together they take on the challenge of setting up a co-operative business in order to create jobs for themselves in their community”

employability skills and to provide an opportunity to obtain work experience to gain future employment. Work placement opportunities include Gender and Development, Organic Farming, Youth Programming, Resource Centre Development, Business Development and Co-operative Research.

The CCA is in its fifth year of providing this work opportunity to young people. To date (September 2001), the CCA has successfully placed 68 interns in Costa Rica, Chile, Ghana, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Nepal, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, China and Korea.

The CCA's involvement with the youth internship program has allowed young Canadians to contribute directly to the objectives of a number of CIDA-funded development projects.

Did you know that...

there are 137 Aboriginal co-operatives in Canada.

Training Future Co-operative Leaders . . . Today

The Canadian Co-operative Association (Ontario), in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada, has developed a unique project "Partners in Promoting Co-op Careers." Trillium funding is supporting the next phase of development.

Did you know that...

co-operatives provide a continuous learning environment where 70,000 volunteers are gaining leadership and management skills as well as democratic governance experience.

The Co-operatives Secretariat

Over 2200 Post-Secondary Students Own the Largest Student Housing Co-operative in Canada and the Second Largest in North America

Faced with the financial strains of university, students at the Waterloo Co-operative Residence Incorporated (WCRI) enjoy the benefits of co-operative housing.

In the fall of 1963, a University of Waterloo student named Richard Rowe went to Toronto on his first work term. There he had the good fortune to join the Co-operative College Residences, Inc., now Campus Co-operative Residences Inc. (CCRI), a successful student housing co-op in operation since 1936. When Richard returned to Waterloo, he was so inspired by the idea of students owning and running their own residence that he told others about the benefits of co-operative living. He managed to impress a group of students to such an extent that they contacted CCRI for assistance to start their own housing co-operative in Waterloo. With support from the Toronto co-operative, they purchased a boarding house to provide housing for 27 people. From there, the Waterloo co-operative grew rapidly and by 1965, it had achieved autonomy from the Toronto co-operative. In 1966, the WCRI opened North America's first student run co-operative residence.

WCRI experienced some growing pains in subsequent years when construction problems delayed anticipated occupancy for some 400 members from fall 1968 to January 1969. Undaunted, the WCRI expanded once again with the completion of three apartment style buildings in 1968. With this accomplishment, WCRI can accommodate up to 850 members during the school year. WCRI has become the largest student housing co-operative in Canada and the second largest in North America. With over 2,200 members, the WCRI is an excellent example of a co-operative solution to common problems.

Boyle Street Co-op Building a Healthy Community

In downtown Edmonton, the programs and partnerships of the Boyle Street Co-op offer a continuum of services that meet individual and community needs. It builds on the strengths of the people [its members] in a holistic and practical way. The Boyle Street Co-op is a unique place where people get down-to-earth help that works; over 5,000 people participate in their programs every year.

Young people form a significant proportion of those who benefit from the approach of the Boyle Street Co-op. They are welcomed at the drop-in centre and can learn new ways to deal with life's challenges. Through the volunteer program, they have the opportunity to be involved in the community and to acquire new skills. Young families can access resources to ensure healthy beginnings. In partnership with other agencies, the Boyle Street Co-op is able to offer even more options to those it serves, including a unique and flexible educational experience at the Boyle Street Education Centre and a safe housing environment for street-involved youth within an inner city youth housing project.

Perhaps most of all, the Boyle Street Co-op offers a sense of belonging. As one participant said, "The Co-op means a lot to me. And the people of the street need the Co-op too. This is my home away from home and one big family."

“With over 2,200 members, WCRI has become the largest student housing co-operative in Canada and the second largest in North America.”

The Co-operatives Secretariat was created in 1987 by the federal government to help build a growing and sustainable co-operative sector. To this end, the Secretariat seeks to expand the use of the co-operative model in Canada as a means to build self-sufficient communities which provide for economic and social needs of citizens.

As part of its mission to build a vibrant co-operative sector, the Secretariat advises the government on policies and programs affecting co-operatives and ensures that their needs are taken into account. The Secretariat also provides a link between the co-operative sector and the federal departments and agencies with which they interact. Moreover, the Secretariat acts as a centre of expertise on co-operatives within the federal administration by providing governments, key stakeholders and the general public with up-to-date information. To this end, the Secretariat collects, analyses and publishes statistical data which are of particular interest to co-operatives, researchers and policy makers. More general information is disseminated to foster greater public awareness and understanding of co-operatives and government policies and programs that deal with co-operatives.

For additional information contact:

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Sir John Carling Building
Room 467, 930 Carling Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0C5

Telephone: (613) 759-7194

Fax: (613) 759-7489

E-mail: coops@em.agr.ca

Internet: www.agr.ca/policy/coop

Do you want to start a co-operative?

Consult our information kit online
Forming our co-operative:
Information kit for entrepreneurs at
www.agr.ca/policy/coop/kitcoop/sphashe.html

Advisory Committee on Co-operatives

An Advisory Committee on Co-operatives was established in 1987 to provide advice to the Minister responsible for Co-operatives with respect to policy, programs and strategies affecting co-operatives. The Committee consists of 16 people, senior officials from the co-operative sector (majority), as well as individuals from provincial government and universities, representing the spectrum of interest of the co-operative sector. The members who sit on the Committee are the following:

1. **Jill Kelly:** British Columbia
Manager, CCEC Credit Union,
Vancouver

2. **Hazel Corcoran:** Alberta
Executive Director,
Canadian Worker
Co-operative Federation

3. **Allen Oberg:** Alberta
Board Member, Agricore

4. **Bill Turner:** Saskatchewan
Co-chair of the Advisory
Committee
Past president, Canadian
Co-operative Association (CCA)

5. **Robert Revet:** Saskatchewan
President, Conseil de la
Coopération de la Saskatchewan

6. **Fernand Vermette:** Manitoba
Executive Director, Fédération
des caisses populaires du
Manitoba

7. **Jim Barr:** Ontario
Senior Vice-President,
CUMIS Group Limited

8. **Earl Wagner:** Ontario
CEO Hensall District
Co-operative Inc.

9. **Paul Massicotte:** Québec
Co-chair of the Advisory
Committee
President, Coopérative
fédérée de Québec



PAUL MASSICOTTE
CO-CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE



BILL TURNER
CO-CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

10. **Jacqueline Mondy:** Québec
Board member, Fédération des
caisses populaires Desjardins
de Québec

11. **Véronique Frigon:** Québec
President, Fédération des
coopératives scolaires
du Québec

12. **Léonce Losier:**
New Brunswick
President, Co-op Atlantic

13. **Leslie Brown:** Nova Scotia
Associate Professor,
Sociology/Anthropology, Mount
Saint Vincent University

14. **Sam Kean:**
Newfoundland and Labrador
Former ADM, Regional
Economic Development,
Gov't of Nfld and Lab.

15. **Beverley Kirby:**
Newfoundland and Labrador
Board member, Indian Head
Consumer's Co-op, Stephenville

16. **Bill Lyall:** Nunavut
President, Arctic Co-operatives
Ltd.

The Canadian Co-operative Association and the *Conseil Canadien de la Coopération* Promoting the Growth and Development of the Co-op Sector

The co-operative sector is well organized and encompasses representative organizations which provide services including development assistance, member education, and advocacy activities.

The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and the *Conseil Canadien de la Coopération (CCC)* are the two national umbrella organizations, representing anglophone and francophone co-operatives respectively. The CCA and CCC are both dedicated to the promotion of the idea of co-operation as a way of advancing the social and economic development of Canada's communities. For more information about those two organizations, visit their websites:

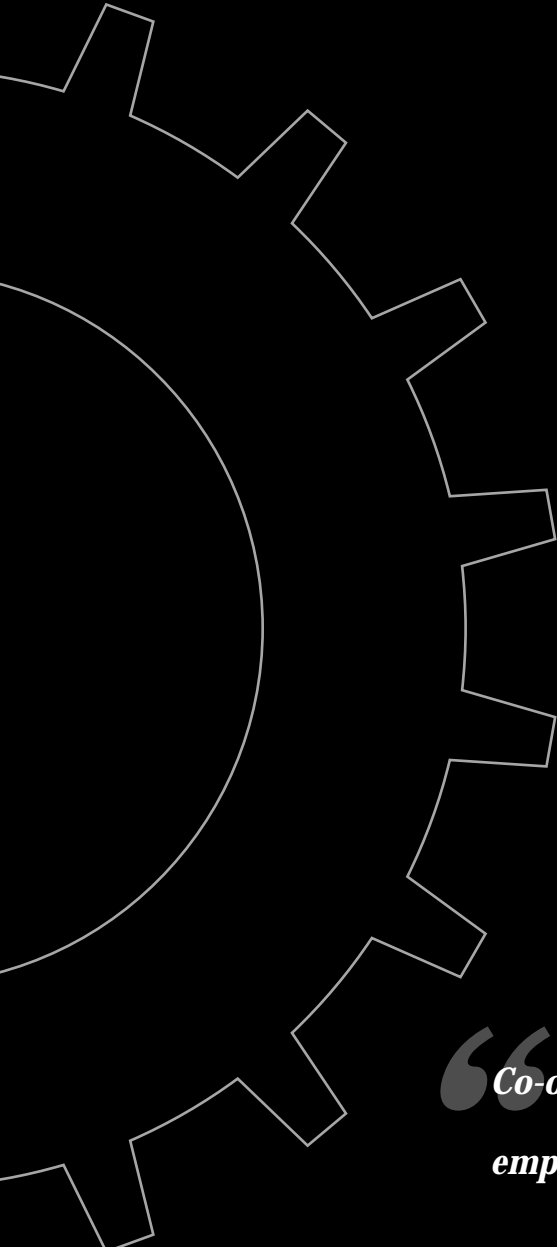
For CCA, www.coopcca.com

For CCC, www.cccoop.ca

Did you know that...

10,000 co-operatives in Canada
provide jobs for about 150,000 people
in both rural and urban regions.





“Neither co-operative development or credit union principles are about money, they are about people making a difference, about people developing themselves and thereby developing their community.”

MARIA SCHMID, SASKATCHEWAN,
CCA YOUTH INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

“Co-operative is about self help, not charity; empowerment not aid.”

ANONYMOUS

“Once established on a firm foundation, co-operatives have remarkable resilience and staying power through good times and bad.”

THE LATE DR. ALEXANDER F. LAIDLAW,
INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CANADIAN
CO-OPERATIVE VISIONARY