

WIN - WIN CO-OP WORLD

1 - 6 periods to give students a theoretical and historical perspective to co-ops globally and in British Columbia.

LIVING IN A WIN-WIN CO-OP WORLD

This module will help you to research and develop opinions about:

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YOU WILL ALSO FIND RELEVANT INFORMATION IN ALL THE OTHER MODULES. TAKE A LOOK!	

Co-operatives are all about co-operation and team work. Before you start work, glance through the module quickly, develop a work plan with your group and decide how you will evaluate your own work. *The items in italics give you ideas for activities.*

You can use the **WORK PLAN TEMPLATE** and the **EVALUATION TEMPLATE** in **WIN-WIN TOOLS**, or develop your own.

For **WIN-WIN GAMES**, click here 

BUILDING A WIN-WIN CO-OP click here 

WIN-WIN CASE FOR CO-OPS click here 

WIN-WIN TOOLS click here 

For **MY WIN-WIN CO-OP FUTURE**, click here 

KEY CONCEPTS IN WIN-WIN CO-OP WORLD. AND A LITTLE BACKGROUND

Co-operation has been a well established method of achieving community goals around the globe for well over a century.

Co-operatives provide services, manufacture, grow and process food, and retail in many economic sectors in British Columbia and globally.

Co-operatives can operate as not-for-profits, for charitable purposes or to create a surplus (profit) for distribution to members.

In the co-op movement, support is offered between co-operators within and beyond the borders of provinces and countries. As a co-operator you are part of that community.

Co-operatives around the world follow 7 principles established through the International Co-operative Association.

Co-operation is a way of ensuring that, as a consumer or worker, you are part of a community of people who believe in working together for mutual benefit and operating in an ethical manner.

Co-operative principles go back at least 2,000 years.

Co-ops or very similar organizations currently operate in almost every country.

There are over 10,000 co-ops in Canada.

Many people find that co-ops are the best way to follow their ethics and values about the way they live while meeting their needs for housing, employment, entertainment, communication, transportation, utilities, etc.

HAVE FUN CO-OPERATING, IT'S GOOD BUSINESS !



Click here for **WIN-WIN INTRODUCTION & INDEX**

PREPARING TO WORK IN A WIN-WIN CO-OP WORLD

If you haven't already done so, play some of the **WIN-WIN CO-OP GAMES**.

Compare several definitions of Co-operatives and versions of the 7 International Co-op Principles.

Read "Co-operating around the globe" and "Co-operating in British Columbia."

Decide whether you will be working as a large group or several small groups. In your group, decide whether you will use the **Work Plan and Evaluation Templates**, in **WIN-WIN TOOLS** or create your own. Start using a Work Plan as soon as possible. Decide whether everyone study all the materials, or will you specialize, then share your information.

You may also want to talk with the members, specially the Board, of a local co-operative, or read the Case Studies in the **WIN-WIN CASE FOR CO-OPS**.

Take a look at **MY WIN-WIN CO-OP FUTURE** to see how you can build some self-training for your own future into your work on this module.

Look through **WIN-WIN TOOLS** for good ideas of contacts you can make to contact the types of co-op you might want to study, plan or start.

The ideal way to understand what it means to live in a **WIN-WIN CO-OP WORLD** is to get involved with a local co-op, whether as a consumer (customer) or a worker. Use the resources, as well as co-ops in your community, to let established co-operators set you on the right track.

GETTING STARTED

If you are not sure where to start, take a look at the other modules, and come up with some questions of your own about the global co-op movement or about co-ops in British Columbia. Work with your group to decide how to approach the topic, whether as a large group, individuals or small groups. Develop your **workplan** and keep in mind how you will **evaluate** yourselves.

Watch for items in this bold italic script, chose some as your action items.

HAVE FUN CO-OPERATING, IT'S GOOD BUSINESS !

**WIN-WIN
GAMES**
click here

For the **WIN-WIN
CASE FOR CO-OPS**,
click here 

For **MY WIN-
WIN CO-OP
FUTURE**, click
here 

For **BUILDING A
WIN-WIN CO-OP**
click here 

Click here 
for **WIN-WIN
TOOLS**

WHAT IS A CO-OP?

Co-operatives are founded on a common idea - that people, no matter what economic class or educational level, know what's best for them and can work together to meet their own needs. Co-operatives, credit unions and *caisses populaires* are owned and operated by their members. Co-ops are democratically controlled - each member has a single vote, regardless of his or her investment in the organization. Generally co-ops are community-based. They are responsible to their own members who determine how the co-op will be run, elect the Board of Directors and allocate the profits of the co-operative among its member-owners. Co-ops apply democratic principles to economic life as people work together to meet common goals and needs. In a co-op, people find strength in collective action and the powerful motivation of mutual support.

www.ontario.coop/whatis/index.php?main_id=161

Definitions:

1. A co-operative is an organization owned by the members who use its services. Co-operatives can provide virtually any product or service, and can be either a non-profit or for-profit enterprise. Source: The Canadian Co-operative Association
www.coopscanada.coop/aboutcoop/
2. A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise. Source: International Cooperative Alliance
3. A co-operative is a business voluntarily owned and controlled by its member patrons and operated for them and by them on a non-profit or cost basis. It is owned by the people who use it. Source: University of Wisconsin Centre for Co-operatives
www.wisc.edu/uwcc/icic/

In this context "autonomous" means that a co-op, unlike other companies, cannot be sold, but is always owned by its members. For "aspirations" you might use "hopes," or "dreams." In British Columbia, a co-op can be a business, a not-for-profit organization or a charity. In the co-op context non-profit means that any surplus is distributed to members. It does NOT mean that co-ops intentionally lose money!

Research credit unions and other co-operatives in your area, maybe using the internet or the [WIN-WIN CASE FOR CO-OPS](#).

www.growmark.com/gmksyst/whatis_coop.htm

Compare this with the definition in the [WIN-WIN INTRODUCTION & INDEX](#) ( click here) then write a definition so that younger people can easily understand.

CO-OP VALUES

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

www.wisc.edu/uwcc/icic/ The International Co-operative Information Centre, University of Wisconsin

Write an explanation of co-op Values so that younger people can easily understand it. Examples help people to understand definitions. Get information about credit unions and other co-operatives in your areas. You can also use the internet or the examples in the WIN-WIN CASE FOR CO-OPS.

ALTERNATIVE DEFINITIONS OF THE 7 INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

The principles can be stated informally as:

- Open Membership – anyone who wants to, can become a member
- Democratic Control – members control the co-operative through their election of its board of directors
- Limited Returns on Investment – returns are limited to keep control in the hands of the users
- Patronage Refunds – earnings returned to members in proportion to the amount of business they do with the co-operative
- Continuing Co-operative Education – a duty to educate members and the general public about the co-operative form of business as a unique and valuable part of the enterprise system
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives – working together is one of the strengths of cooperatives
- Concern For Community – while focusing on members' needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members

Another version:

- Voluntary and open membership. No one is forced to join. Once the criteria for membership have been set, anyone who qualifies must be allowed to join.
- Democratic member control. Every member has an equal voice regardless of how much they invest in the co-op.
- Member economic participation. Members must buy a share in the organization.
- Autonomy and independence. The co-op makes its own decisions and cannot be owned by another organization.
- Education, training, and information. The co-op must provide education, training and information to its members, usually about co-ops in general, and the co-op's work.
- Co-operation among co-operatives. Co-ops help each other out with information, buying from each other and sharing resources.
- Concern for community. Co-ops contribute in many ways to the communities in which they operate.

Compare this with the more formal version in the WIN-WIN INTRODUCTION & INDEX (🌸 click here) then write a you could apply to activities with others in your daily life.

Ideas for you to use in developing your opinions

BUILDING A WIN-WIN
CO-OP [click here](#) 

Find out more about the Co-op Principles, and the formal descriptions in [BUILDING YOUR WIN-WIN CO-OP](#).

Critique and compare. Decide which explanation of each principle is clearest. Compare them with explanations from other sources such as local co-ops, the internet, your library, business and community organizations, and government representatives. Research these alternatives, then restate the principles to be meaningful to your peers. Be creative in how you communicate, possibly using art, music, role-playing and humour to convey your message.

Use your powers of observation and imagination. Identify situations in your experience where these principles apply. Alternatively, be creative and invent an organization that would operate according to the principles.

Contrast. Draft a set of principles that you feel could be accepted internationally for the guidance of other types of organizations such as private businesses, large corporations, not-for-profit organizations, public institutions (such as schools), faith-based organizations, sports and recreational organizations, or government.

Ask others. Find out how each of these is interpreted by contacting co-ops in your area (remember this includes credit unions), by developing your own web-search, or from organizations on the Resource List. In some areas you will be able to obtain excellent information from the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Trade, Community Futures, or the public library. Before contacting any of these, as a group, decide exactly what you are going to ask, and how you will present your questions so that the person to whom you are speaking will view this as an interesting discussion, not an unwanted distraction.

Defend or critique. Communicate why you support or dislike each of the principles.

Challenge. Describe or dramatize a situation in which a co-op would have to think carefully about how to act according to one of the International Principles.

Internationalize. Describe or dramatize how one or more of these principles might be implemented by co-ops operating in different countries.

Translate. Rewrite the principles using something other than a keyboard and English. Be creative, even in your ideas of "write" and "English."

CO-OPERATION AROUND THE GLOBE – THE START OF A VERY SHORT VERSION OF A LONG HISTORY

Co-operation is not new. The idea of common ownership and distribution according to need or effort occurs in many religious and cultural traditions. We'll look at some early examples.

From the Fénechas, or "Brehon Law," of Ireland, it seems that originally - in prehistoric times - the land was all common property, belonging to the tribe, not to individuals, and chief and people were liable to be called on to give up their portions for a new distribution.

Or we can think about Israel at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea about 2000 years ago. We are told that shortly after Jesus was crucified, his followers "had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."

CO-OPERATION – THE NEXT THOUSAND YEARS

Almost 500 years later, Brehon law was first written down, probably in 438 A.D. It stated that part of the arable land, which was called the Tribe-land and formed by far the largest part of the tribe's territory, belonged to the people in general, no part being private property. The non-arable or wasteland - mountain, forest, bog, etc. was Commons-land. This was not owned by individuals; but all free persons had a right to use it for grazing, for procuring fuel, or for hunting. There was no need to subdivide the commons by fences, for the cattle of all grazed over it without distinction. This custom still exists in many places all through Ireland.

In England also every village had an area know as "The Commons" because they were owned "in common" and used by all for grazing. Even now, when most grazing is in enclosed fields, most villages still have a "commons" area. Grazing rights were at the heart of the economy of much of Europe until the Agricultural Revolution in the 1700s when land was gradually enclosed and agriculture intensified. These areas are still accessed by all residents, but are now mainly enjoyed by all for walks and picnics.

CO-OPERATION – THE FIRE RESPONSE EFFORTS OF 1696 TRAVEL TO NORTH AMERICA

The "Amicable Contributionship for Insuring Houses from Loss by Fire" was formed in London, England in 1696. It is probable that Benjamin Franklin knew of this when he and others formed the first successful co-operative in the USA, "The Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses from Loss by Fire" in 1752. The "Contributionship" was the first mutual in the USA, and is the oldest continuing fire insurance company and the third oldest corporation in that country.

CO-OPERATION – CHALLENGES FROM THE EARLY 1800s

With the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, many agricultural and "cottage industry" workers were displaced, lost their homes and the ability to feed their families. The work that was available for men, women and children was dirty, dangerous and very poorly paid.

A minority of people, poor and rich, decided to make changes. The writings of William King, an English physician and philanthropist, and Robert Owen, a Welsh manufacturer and social reformer, inspired co-operative experiments.

Owen (1771 - 1858) made his fortune in the cotton trade. He believed in putting his workers in a good environment with access to education for themselves and their children. He had the idea of forming "villages of co-operation" where workers would drag themselves out of poverty by growing their own food, making their own clothes and ultimately becoming self-governing. Inspired by Owen, Dr. William King (1786-1865), made the ideas more workable and practical. King believed in starting small, and helping people to set up co-operatives for themselves. He founded a monthly paper, "The Cooperator," in May 1828. This gave a mixture of co-operative philosophy and practical advice about running a shop using co-operative principles. He proposed sensible rules, such as having a weekly account audit, having 3 trustees, and not having meetings in pubs (to avoid drinking the profits).

FAMOUS EARLY CO-OPERATION

Between 1800 and 1830 the cotton industry in the North of England suffered a collapse and the wages of hand-loom weavers fell drastically. By 1840 unemployment rose above 60% in some places. A few poor weavers joined together to form the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society at the end of 1843. The Rochdale Pioneers, as they became known, set out the "Rochdale Principles" in 1844, which form the basis of the co-operative movement today. These rules were:

1. Open membership.
2. Democratic control (one man, one vote).
3. Distribution of surplus in proportion to trade.
4. Payment of limited interest on capital.
5. Political and religious neutrality.
6. Cash trading.
7. Promotion of education.

The opening of a little store in December 1844 really started the Co-operative Movement. The 28 founding members of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society set up shop in Toad Lane, Rochdale, to sell the bare essentials such as butter, sugar, flour and oatmeal, at fair prices and with honest weights and measures. This started the Co-op Movement that has changed the lives of millions of ordinary working people throughout the world. The Rochdale Pioneers pointed the way for like-minded people to put fairness above profit.

THE CO-OP IDEA SPREADS

After 1844, the Co-operative idea spread rapidly. The Rochdale style consumer co-operative became the model for others to follow because it worked so effectively. The "Rochdale Principles" included voluntary and open membership, democratic control, and profits returned to members in proportion to their purchases. In North America the term "patronage or matronage payment" is often used. In the UK, it is still known as the Co-op "dividend" or "divi."

In 1889 agriculturalist and statesman Sir Horace Plunkett set up a program of co-operative development and agricultural education in Ireland and established his first co-operative "creamery" (dairy) in 1891. Plunkett and a small band of influential associates inspired the creation of hundreds of co-operatives, first in Ireland, then the USA, then around the globe. The Plunkett Foundation bears the name of its founder, and still supports education in the co-operative sector.

As the 20th century began, the credit union idea surfaced in Canada. In 1900, Alphonse Desjardins organized a credit union (*caisse populaire*) in Levis, Quebec. He founded other credit unions, including the first one in the United States, in 1909 in New Hampshire. *For more about co-operation in Canada, scroll down to [EARLY DAYS OF CO-OPS IN CANADA](#).*

Ideas for your global co-op history activities

Research any of the events, individuals or organizations mentioned in the [SHORT HISTORY](#) above and demonstrate how they are reflected in today's co-op world. Research a co-op or co-op organization near you to find out what or who inspired the founders.

Find other early, early examples of co-operation. Think about pre-history. Think about non-humans. Make use of fact, hypothesis and fiction. Create a time-line related to the history of the co-op movement.

On a map, show the connections between early co-op influences. Think of a way to show where the ideas started and the directions in which they spread. Is there a relationship between the distance the ideas travelled and the time it took?

What influences would encourage or discourage the spread of co-operative ideas and the development of co-operatives today? Think about communication, politics, economics, and tradition. Think about the benefits the co-ops bring to the members and their community? How can you spread this information?

Co-operative communities are now widespread with the largest and most successful examples being at Mondragon in the Basque country of Spain and the Emilia Romagna area of Italy www.commonground.ca/iss/0306143/coop.shtml . Co-operatives were also successful in Yugoslavia under Marshal Tito where Workers Councils gained a significant role in management.

In the United Kingdom, co-operatives formed the Co-operative Party in the early 20th century to represent members of co-ops in Parliament. The Co-operative Party now has a permanent electoral pact with the Labour Party, and some Labour MPs are Co-operative Party members. British Co-operatives retain a significant market share in food retail and the travel industry in some areas of England and Wales.

The International Cooperative Alliance www.coop.org/ now lists co-operatives in Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Pacific Islands, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovak, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. Today over 200 national co-operative organizations representing 92 nations belong to ICA. The ICA aims to promote co-operative development and trade worldwide and has more than 750 million individual members as well as the national organizations that are members.

Co-operating communities. In some areas, co-ops are a very large segment of the overall economy. Notable examples are the Mondragon in Spain www.mondragon.mcc.es/ing/index.asp and Emilia Romagna in Italy.

- In Mondragon, in 1991, there were 160 employee-owned co-operatives, involving 23,000 member owners, with sales grossing \$3 billion dollars US.
- The Emilia Romagna region is home to a population of 3.9 million people (seven percent of the national population). The regional capital, Bologna, is both a city and a province and has a population of 380,000. Emilia Romagna is one of the most successful regions in Europe, number 11 or the 122 regions of the EU in terms of GNP per inhabitant. For example, in Bologna, 70% of households own their homes and over 85% of the city's social services are provided by social co-ops.

Ideas for your work on the global co-op community

Create a globe. Colour and name the countries in which there are co-ops. Use the ICA and other websites in the Resource List..

Find out why and how the first co-operative organizations were formed in several countries. How did they achieve their aims? What obstacles did they face? How were these overcome, or were they insurmountable? How did co-operators in various countries support each other?

In many areas, it is difficult to gain any financial security. Co-ops help people to work together for their mutual benefit. Research the role of co-ops in areas where coffee and chocolate are grown, and carpets made. How do they help to overcome violence towards workers, including child slaves? How do the actions of individuals in your community impact the workers in these co-ops?

Research a "co-operating community." Your questions might include:

- *How was the co-op movement started in the area, and why? Why has it grown so strongly?*
- *What percentage of the region's GDP is created by co-operatives and what percentage of the population are co-op members?*
- *How does the region's per capita income, its expenditure on the arts, education, recreation, and its unemployment rates compare with other regions?*

Create a presentation of your analysis of this information, using illustrations, maps, music or food from the region to give a feel of the atmosphere and environment.

Co-op sectors. Use the internet to search for co-op activity in various economic sectors. Which are the most active co-op sectors? Why? Are the same sectors the most "co-op rich" in every jurisdiction? If so, why? If not, what has led to growth in a particular area? How do worker income, worker control, local control of the economy, and community access to services compare in areas where there is considerable co-op activity, in contrast to those with low co-op activity?

SUPPORT FOR THE CO-OP SECTOR FROM ASSOCIATIONS AND GOVERNMENT

IN CANADA

In many areas, co-operatives have formed organizations, sometimes with help from government. Full contact information for the organizations listed below is given in the **RESOURCE LIST** of the **WIN-WIN TOOLS**.

- The British Columbia Co-operative Association www.bcca.coop/index.htm
- the British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies web.uvic.ca/bcics/
- The Canadian Co-op Association www.coopscanada.coop/ and Le Conseil Canadien de la Coopération www.ccc.coop/francais/accueil/accueil.asp
- The Canadian Worker Co-op Federation www.canadianworker.coop/
- The Cooperative Development Initiative of the Government of Canada www.agr.gc.ca/policy/coop/

WIN-WIN TOOLS click here 

INTERNATIONALLY

Co-ops around the globe, including those in Canada, benefit from the work of international organizations. Contact information for these organizations is given in the **RESOURCE LIST** of the **WIN-WIN TOOLS**.

- The International Cooperative Alliance www.coop.org/
- The United Nations Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives www.copacgva.org/
- At the United Nations, www.ilo.org/dyn/empent/empent.portal?p_prog=C&p_lang=EN Co-ops Branch of the International Labour Organization and Sustainable Development Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization www.fao.org/sd/sddef_en.htm
- Worker Ownership Institute www.workerownership.org/history.html

IN THE USA

Some of the resources in the USA include:

- Ohio Employee Ownership Center, <http://dept.kent.edu/oeoc/>
- Co-operative Grocer http://www.cooperativegrocer.coop/cg_coops.html
- National Co-operative Business Association <http://www.ncba.coop/about.cfm>
- University of Wisconsin Center for Co-operatives <http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/>
- Worker Ownership Institute <http://www.workerownership.org/>

And, for some excellent articles and resources: <http://www.red-coral.net/Collect.html> and <http://www.red-coral.net/WorkCoops.html>

IN IRELAND

For a viewpoint that is a little different from North America, but which demonstrates the global similarities in the aims of co-ops, you might like information from Ireland.

www.icos.ie/home/index.asp The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society. As the co-ordinating organisation for co-operatives in Ireland, ICOS provides a range of services to its member co-operatives and represents them on national and international organisations. ICOS is represented on many expert working groups, advisory committees and other consultative bodies, advising Government Departments, the European Commission and others on co-operative views on many issues. ICOS is a member of COGECA (European Association of Agricultural and Fishing Co-operatives).

www.ucc.ie/acad/foodecon/centre_b.html The Centre for Co-operative Studies, University College Cork gives a good overview of the role of academic organizations in supporting individual co-ops, co-ops within one country, and the wider co-op community.

<http://www.socialeconomynetwork.org/> Information about Co-operatives and other types of Community Economic Development in Northern Ireland.

Ideas for ways you can clarify and state your views on the support available to co-ops

Identify resources. List the organizations that support co-ops in the province, the country, internationally or by sector. Identify the support available from each. Prepare the key information to present to your peers. Develop a statement of the aims of each organization. Identify their sources of funding. There is almost always a close link between where organizations obtain the funds to enable them to operate, and the type of work they undertake most enthusiastically. Rate the organizations in terms of the ease with which you found them, and the clarity of their information.

Solutions to real problems. *Develop a question or problem related to learning about co-ops. Decide which organization would be best able to help you find answers. Formulate the question so that your target organization will want to help you. Ask for the information. You may need to restate your question, or ask several organizations. Thank them all, even those that did not solve the problem. Summarize the process for your peers, suggesting how to obtain appropriate information more effectively in future.*

Challenges and help for real co-ops. *Ask co-ops what challenges they have faced and where they have received help. If they are unaware of the help available, offer e a list of resources and the help they provide. You may need to approach several co-ops. Thank all; even those that did not respond. Summarize the process for your peers, listing those areas in which co-ops have found help where they expected, where it has come from unexpected sources, and where they have not been able to find help. Analyse whether the expectations of help were realistic, and whether the co-ops sought help in an effective manner. Present your findings.*

Looking to the future. *List the co-ops in which your group, friends or family, are currently involved. Remember to include the Credit Unions. Alternatively, think about a sector in your community in which a co-op could operate. For these current or future co-ops, identify areas in which they might seek help and, for each area, the most probable source of help.*

Educating your community. *Co-ops are businesses and should be able to access the type of help available to any business in your area. As you explore this, note any organizations that seem to be unaware of the role of co-ops in the economy. Prepare a short statement for them of how co-ops contribute financially, in creating employment, and in meeting the needs of the community. Formulate this so that it is attractive. Ask the organizations if you can make a presentation about co-ops. If they accept, help them to understand that co-ops are a vital component of a healthy community, and work in co-operation with all other parts of the community. You will be an ambassador. Thank you for your support of the co-operative community.*

Farther afield. *What help is available to co-ops in one of the developing countries. Why are co-ops especially important in these areas? What part do Canadian co-ops, co-op associations and government play in helping these co-ops? What can we learn from co-ops in developing countries?*

Click on <http://www.mongolia.coop/> then on “English” to find out about co-ops in Mongolia and to access another excellent list of co-op resources. 40% of the population of Mongolia is nomadic, moving to wherever there is grazing and water for their herds of horses, camels, cattle and yaks and flocks of sheep and goats . Watch the movie “The Weeping Camel” and develop ideas about how the harsh environment has nurtured a culture of co-operation. If Mongolia fascinates you, and you want to know what it’s like for a Canadian to work in the co-op sector in Mongolia, email Vanessa at co-op@canadac.com

EARLY DAYS OF CO-OPS IN CANADA: HIGH POINTS OF THE HISTORY

For a look at the global history of co-ops, go back to **A VERY SHORT VERSION OF A LONG HISTORY.**

The first co-operative business in North America was established in Stellarton, Nova Scotia, in **1861**.

Find out more at

www.nscouncil.ns.ca/didyouknow.html

In the **1870s and 1880s**, a large industrial union, the Knights of Labour, organized many worker co-ops across the continent including a co-operative factory in Merrickville, Ontario.

web.uvic.ca/bcics/research/worker/history.htm



In the **1890s** the Desjardins family in Québec struggled with poverty. When young Alphonse Desjardins grew up he became deeply troubled by the practice of usury and the lack of credit available to most Canadians. Having read about the development of cooperative banking institutions in Europe, he promoted the idea in his own parish of Lévis, Québec. He and his wife Dorimène, along with several neighbors, formed the **Lévis *caisse populaire*** in 1900, based in their home. Alphonse worked half the year in Ottawa for the Canadian Parliament, and Dorimène - a mother of ten and intelligent financial thinker - served as manager of the *Caisse*. As her family would be legally vulnerable should the *caisse populaire* experience financial difficulties, Dorimène urged Alphonse to seek legal standing for the *caisse*. The Government of Québec passed the first of such laws in 1906. From its base in the Desjardins home, the *caisse populaire* movement spread slowly but effectively through the parishes of Québec and into Francophone communities in other provinces. With Dorimène as his advisor, Desjardins organized 175 *caisses* in Québec.

The Desjardins were behind the formation of credit unions in the U.S. as well. In 1908, Alphonse addressed parish members at St. Mary's Church in Manchester, New Hampshire. As a result of his visit, they organized the first U.S. cooperative credit society in 1908. At the same time, he met Pierre Jay, the Massachusetts Banking Commissioner, who was looking for a form of financial institution that could replace the loan sharking of the time. Jay was intrigued with the *caisse populaire* idea, and sought Desjardins' help in getting the Massachusetts legislature to pass the first credit union law in the United States.

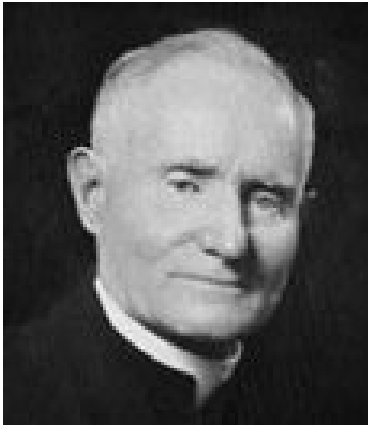


After Alphonse died in 1920, Dorimène retained the respect of the leaders throughout her life. They sought her advice, asking whether they were making decisions as Alphonse would have wished.



www.woccu.org/press/awards/dsa2.php In 2000, Alphonse and Dorimène Desjardins were posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the World Credit Unions. The same year a bronze statue by sculptor Pascale Archambault was erected in their home town of Lévis.

www.desjardins.com/en/a_propos/societes_filiales/reseau_caisses/shad/maison.jsp



At about the same time, Father James Tompkins, a very innovative, influential and inspirational individual set out to take actions on the extreme poverty and hardship that was being faced by small Eastern Nova Scotia communities. He convinced the people in small communities that the secret to prosperity was for them to take their destiny into their own hands. Citizens had to stand together and work towards common constructive goals. Out of his teachings and grassroots organizing came some remarkable accomplishments:

- Formation of the Maritime Fishermen's Union in 1930.
- Formation of the First N.S. Credit Union.
- Development of the Regional Library System for N.S.
- Sparking an initial drive towards adult education in Cape Breton, N.S.
- Developing the first housing Co-op in North America.

Father Tompkins' career is highlighted by his work in the communities of Canso/Little Dover and Glace Bay/Reserve Mines. Father Moses Coady and others in the Maritimes as well as the rest of Canada took up his role of establishing local co-operatives, libraries, credit unions and other local organizations. <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/co-op/introduc.htm> and www.earthfuture.com/seconomy/sei09.asp


Around and after 1900, agriculture co-operatives such as United Grain Growers banded together to buy and sell farm supplies and products. Alberta's a rich history of development through co-operatives continues to this day.

One of the early co-op activities in Canada was the establishment of the Guelph Campus Co-op in 1913 as a retail co-operative which later went on to develop student housing and other services.

The 1930's saw the birth of building co-operatives and the continuing housing co-op. Building co-ops are those incorporated for the bulk purchasing of materials and construction services. Once the houses are built, the co-operative dissolves and the members own their houses individually. This type of co-operative is popular particularly in the Maritimes, Québec and Saskatchewan.



In a continuing housing co-operative such as Sarcee Meadows the group not only builds or acquires the buildings, but continues to own or lease them. Members have the right to occupy, but without individual ownership. For more information on housing co-ops and their history, visit www.sarceemeadows.coop/co_op_history.htm Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative.

The first student housing co-op, Campus Co-op Residence Inc., was created at the University of Toronto in 1936. For more information on student co-operatives, click here  for **MY WIN-WIN CO-OP FUTURE**.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, many communities in the NWT and Nunavut formed Co-operatives as member-owned businesses in order to provide community residents with services and employment opportunities. Today, there are 36 Co-operatives in the NWT, Nunavut and Northern Manitoba communities, representing the interests of thousands of members and providing an important source of income for hundreds of northern families through employment and the purchase of arts and crafts, furs and country foods. Northern Co-operatives are involved in general merchandise retailing, hotels, contracting, taxi and cartage services, commercial fisheries, bakeries, and cable television services.

The NWT, Nunavut and Northern Manitoba Co-operatives affiliated over the years to form two Co-operatively-owned subsidiary service organizations: Arctic Co-operatives Limited and the Arctic Co-operative Development Fund. These organizations are owned by Member Co-operatives and provide a number of essential services including: accounting and auditing for members, art marketing, supply and transportation of merchandise inventory, training and education for managers and Boards of Directors, management advisory services and support services in the areas of hotel and tourism, cable television, fuel delivery and project development.

With strong member support in the northern communities, and the integration of the services provided by the central organizations, the Co-operative Movement has become a major economic and social force in the north. www.innsnorth.com/html/inns-aboutus-history.htm

In the late 1960s, after a particularly bad fishing year, the people of the Evangeline region of Prince Edward Island held a meeting in a parish hall to work out how to protect their community from the volatility of the fishing industry. Already having some experience with co-operatives in the fisheries sector, the people decided to apply the co-operative model to other enterprises and create new community-owned businesses. Over the ensuing years, they constructed a pioneer village, a co-op restaurant and dinner theatre, a children's clothing factory, a co-operatively owned wood lot, a sawmill, and a co-operative funeral home. By 1992, "through self-help, co-operation and the interdependence of many parts, the community owned and controlled most of its local resources, thus providing a promising and sustainable future for its children."

The 1970 Canada Cooperative Associations Act (CCAA) was based on the then current Canada Corporations Act. Federal business corporate law was substantially revised. The Canada Cooperative Associations Act was not revised, but work gradually started on discussing what changes were needed. Also in 1970, the Co-operative Housing Federation (CHF), a resource and special interest

group to promote the housing co-operative concept, was formed. They lobbied in favour of the 1973 amendments to the National Housing Act which allowed for the development of co-op housing all across Canada.

From 1973 to 1978 over a hundred housing co-operatives were developed in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta. After 1978 housing co-operatives were developed across Canada in greater numbers than ever before. With growth came recognition, and the co-operative movement has taken its place as the “third sector” of housing, being neither “public” nor “private” in nature.

At approximately the same time, co-ops moved into the film business when the Winnipeg Film Group began in 1974 to make, distribute and exhibit their own films. The WFG has grown over the years to become one of the busiest and best-known cooperatives in Canada. Highlights include:

- 2001 Awards and screening in Regina, Montreal, Toronto.
- 2002 Screenings at festivals in Toronto and Clermont-Ferrand.
- 2003 Screenings at festivals in Rotterdam, Toronto and Venice.
- 2004 The Winnipeg Film Group celebrated its 30th Anniversary with the creation of a Six Part Historical DVD Collection.

New Dawn Enterprises in Sydney, Nova Scotia was founded in 1976. New Dawn is rooted in the philosophy and practices of the Antigonish Movement. Since 1976, a \$20 million organization has arisen from its mission of "establishing and operating ventures that contribute to the creation of a self-supporting community." One of its great achievements has been to provide housing to those with below-average incomes. Among others who benefit from New Dawn Enterprises are the mentally challenged, seniors, and those needing institutional care.

At a meeting in February of 1990, representatives of worker cooperatives from across Canada came together for the first time to discuss whether they should develop a national organization to represent their interests. Although worker co-ops had been on the agenda with the Canadian Cooperative Association and the Cooperatives Secretariat, which saw them as having the potential to lead a new wave of co-op development, worker co-operators themselves had little input on the national level and only marginal communication among themselves. It was clear after a couple of days of meetings that there was an opportunity that could only be met by forming a national organization. The **Canadian Worker Cooperative Federation (CWCF)** was founded the following year in the spring of 1991, in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

The objectives of the CWCF are:

- To work for the development and expansion of businesses organized according to co-op principles and the principles of worker ownership and control, and to promote the ideals of democracy in the work place.
- To provide leadership and a voice for worker co-ops.

In 1992, the federal government ended its financial support for new housing co-operatives but co-operative housing is still a vibrant example of how successful communities can be built and sustained across a range of social, economic and geographic contexts.

Federally incorporated non-financial cooperatives had felt they were operating under a competitive disadvantage because of an outdated corporate governance structure. www.parl.gc.ca/common/Bills_ls.asp?Parl=36&Ses=1&ls=C5 During the 80s and early 90s,

the Canadian Co-operative Association and *le Conseil canadien de la coopération* initiated discussions and debates about the issues involved in changing the Canadian Cooperative Associations Act, and developing draft legislation. In July 1996 the government announced it would be introducing legislation after public consultation. A discussion document based on the draft legislation was circulated in September of that year. The 1997 Bill C-5 repealed the 1970 Canada Cooperative Associations Act and brought legislation covering federal non-financial cooperatives into line with that of federal business corporations and financial institutions.

For an understanding of co-ops as part of the whole Community Economic Development field, research the work of Rev. Dr. Moses Coady and Rev. Dr. Greg MacLeod and the Antigonish Movement <http://www.seascape.ns.ca/~twocats/AMWEB.html>

For an in-depth understanding, you could read *FROM MONDRAGON TO AMERICA - EXPERIMENTS IN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT* in which Dr. MacLeod describes and analyses the Mondragon complex of companies operating in the Basque region of Spain. Mondragon, founded by priest Don José Maria, is a collective organization owned entirely by workers and customers that now encompasses over 40,000 workers and generates over ten billion dollars in annual sales. Mondragon is an economic and social experiment, with an altruistic sense of community dominating the entire system.

For fun, check the Antigonish Games at <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/co-op/resource.htm>



Additional information is available at:

- www.coop-studies.usask.ca/publications/electronic_format/ provides a list of publications of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan
- web.uvic.ca/bcics/research/worker/history.htm The British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies
- <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/co-op/introduc.htm> Industry Canada

Ideas for how you can add to the story of co-ops in Canada

Compare the start-up of several credit unions, possibly the Mouvement Desjardin and the Nelson and District Credit Union. Contact members of housing co-ops in your area, or the Co-operative Housing Federation. What community challenges do housing co-ops address? How would you define a "successful housing co-op?" What "best practices" distinguish the best? Talk with the Co-operative Housing Federation, City Hall and a realtor. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of public, private and co-op housing from the view-point of the resident and the community.

What is the special role and opportunity for co-ops in isolated communities in Canada?

CO-OPS IN CANADA TODAY

Contact friends or siblings at college and university to find out how they are involved with co-ops at these institutions and how the co-ops are of benefit to their members.

Research any of the following:

- *the early lives and work achievements of Alphonse and Dorimène Desjardins or Father James Tompkins, or any of the other passionate pioneers of co-ops.*
- *the role of organizations such as New Dawn, Tamarack, and the Canadian Community Economic Development Network in the development of co-ops in Canada.*
- *the relationship between co-ops and other aspects of Community Economic Development.*
- *the role, in the co-op movement, of individuals and organizations that are motivated by their faith to help others.*



Co-ops are everywhere - and in every sector of life. The co-op model can be used by many types of organizations, non-profit or for-profit. A key difference between other structures and a co-op's structure comes in the order of priorities which, for a co-op, are to first meet the needs of its membership in a productive, self-sufficient and socially responsible manner. A growing number of people in Canada and around the world are recognizing the benefits of doing business the co-op way. Today, about 10 million Canadians are members of co-ops and credit unions because they recognize the value in bottom-up influence as opposed to top-down control.

CREDIT UNIONS AND CAISSE POPULAIRES

Canada has the world's highest per capita membership in the credit union movement, with over 10 million members, or about one-third of the Canadian population? www.fin.gc.ca/toce/2002/ccu_e.html. Canadian Credit Unions http://canadian-creditreport.com/creditunions_more.htm

ABORIGINAL CO-OPS IN CANADA TODAY

Aboriginal peoples in Canada today consider the use of co-operatives for three primary reasons:

- Aboriginal peoples are more determined than ever to shape their own futures, to increase educational opportunities, and to preserve traditional ways.
- Aboriginal peoples and their leaders are coping with problems of unemployment, poorer health experiences than other Canadians, making rapid adjustments to urban life, and the reformulation of Indigenous governance structures. The co-operative model can be useful in fostering growth, in sharing responsibilities and in spreading accountability.
- Decisions made today will have long-term implications for generations of Aboriginal people as yet unborn. The co-operative model can ensure continuing Aboriginal ownership of resources; the building of social as well as economic capital; and a "concern for community" enshrined in the principles of co-operative enterprise. www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/ra/coo/intr_e.html

CHOCOLATE

Do you like **chocolate**? La Siembra Co-op is a leading North American fair trade organization offering high-quality, certified, fair trade organic products that improve the livelihoods of family farmers and the well being of communities at home and abroad. Incorporated in 1999, La Siembra is the first organization to import, manufacture and distribute fair trade certified organic cocoa products in North America. La Siembra's Cocoa Camino products are sold throughout Canada and expanding into the USA. La Siembra's Fair Trade certification guarantees consumers that farmers receive higher than world market prices. This includes the payment of organic and social premiums that are used for development programs, decided on by the producer co-op members.

La Siembra's Organic cocoa and sugar cane certification means better health for farmers, the environment, and the consumer. La Siembra's cocoa is produced using traditional Shade Grown techniques that preserve the environment and maintain bio-diversity while providing a much-needed habitat for migratory birds.

La Siembra sources its cocoa from co-operatives of family farms who grow organically under a shade canopy in the rainforests of the Dominican Republic. www.lasiembra.com/coop.htm *Have fun at La Siembra's site. Try* www.g8challenge.com/launch.html

Ideas for your work on Canadian co-ops

How will you be involved, or more involved, with co-ops in Canada. How can you be involved with co-ops around the world. Look at the materials at <http://www.mosaic-coop.org/default.htm> and <http://www.esperanzaenaccion.org/index.php> for information about Mosaic, "Hope in Action" and Fair Trade.

Click here  to use the materials in MY WIN-WIN CO-OP FUTURE

Find the link between the Grey Cup, Earl Grey Tea and credit unions.

Some communities and some sectors have disproportionately large, or small, representation of co-ops. Interview teachers, City Hall, the Chambre of Commerce, financial institutions, business people and young people to find out if they know how co-ops contribute to the local economy, and how stable and durable they are compared with other types of business. Develop a hypothesis about why your community is co-op rich or poor. Develop a strategy to increase the co-op activity in communities in your area.

Visit British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies, University of Victoria <http://web.uvic.ca/bcics/research/index.html> for more information on the history and current state of co-ops in Canada in several sectors. Develop a display of surprising and positive information about co-ops and their impact on Canadian communities. Compare the history and current status of co-ops in Canada compared with other countries. Identify ways in which the Canadian co-op experience is unique, and how this occurred. What pointers does this give for the health of Canadian co-ops and the Canadian co-op sector in the future?

How can the development of co-ops be used to uphold the Canadian values of "Peace, order and good governance" in a world of commercialism, trans-national corporations and militarism?

A list of many of the co-ops in British Columbia is available at http://bcics.uvic.ca/galleria/site_map.html but currently there is no complete list - the same situation as with any other type of incorporation. Click here 🌿 for other BC co-ops profiled in **WIN-WIN CASE FOR CO-OPS**.

BECOMING A LEGAL CO-OP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

To find out about the basics of co-op formation in British Columbia, click here 🌿 to visit **BUILDING YOUR WIN-WIN CO-OP**. This module explains the steps in forming a co-op, and encourages you to set up a "mock" co-op within your school or organization without undertaking the full legal process to establish a formal co-op. If you want to go a step further, spend considerable time on the website of the BC Co-op Association <http://www.bcca.coop/about/starting.htm> and the website of the BC Institute for Co-operative Studies at <http://web.uvic.ca/bcics/> and at <http://www.coopscanada.coop/> which is the site for the Canadian Co-op Association.

Ideas for your work on British Columbia Co-ops

Develop a simple questionnaire to find out about the co-op community by asking its members where they first learned about co-ops, and what other co-ops they know in the province. When you have collected your information, send it to us to add to the community's self-knowledge.

Find out if there are any special strengths or challenges associated with co-ops started by groups of people with a common background (youth, aboriginal, women, immigrants, etc) as compared with those based on a geographic community or a sector. How can others build on the strengths of these groups, or can help them overcome challenges?



CO-OP SECTORS AND TYPES OF ORGANIZATION

Co-ops provide goods and services in almost every business sector and a number of community and social sectors.

Everything from **funeral homes** to **high-tech research** to popular **bands** can be, and is, operated by co-operators.

A **housing co-operative** is a legal mechanism for ownership of housing where residents either own shares (share capital co-op) or have membership and occupancy rights in a not-for-profit continuing co-operative (non-share capital co-op).

A **utility co-operative** is a public utility that is owned by its customers. In the United States, many such co-operatives were formed to provide rural electrical and telephone service as part of "the New Deal." [Car sharing](#) is a process by which multiple households share vehicles, which are stored in convenient common locations. It may be thought of as a very short-term, locally based car rental.

The [Best Western hotel chain](#) is actually a giant co-operative, although it now calls itself a membership association. Mountain Equipment Co-op, North Coast Artists' Co-op, the Winnipeg Film Group and the Kootenay Film & Video Co-op are all in the Arts/Recreation sector.

In the **Financial sector** Credit unions provide co-operative banking and Co-operators Insurance serves members across Canada. The *caisse populaire* movement started by [Alphonse Desjardins](#) in [Quebec](#) pioneered credit unions. Credit Unions are also established in the UK, France, Germany, Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Spain, Italy and Eastern Europe.

Co-ops provide **Social Services** such as day-care and health services. Many co-ops provide a wide range of services to **targeted population groups** such as the Aboriginal population or Youth.

Co-operatives are an important part of the **Agri-Food** sector in many countries, involved in everything from farm operations to processing, distribution and retail services. New Generation Co-ops first operated in the Agri-food sector. The **Forestry** and **Fisheries** sectors include co-operatives.

THE WAYS IN WHICH CO-OPS ARE ORGANIZED

Worker co-operatives are wholly and democratically controlled by their "worker-owners." Membership is not necessarily compulsory for employees. Probably the best known example of worker co-operation is the Mondragon Co-operative Corporation (MCC) in the Basque Country.

Consumer co-operatives: provide their members with goods and services for their personal use. Examples: Food, credit unions, housing, insurance co-operatives, etc.

Producer, purchasing or marketing co-operatives provide economies of scale to their members. Some obtain discounts for their members by bulk-buying. Some process and market their members' products and services. In most cases the members of the co-operative are businesses rather than individuals. In many countries farmers, grocery stores, hardware stores and pharmacies operate in this way.

Shareholder co-operatives are incorporated co-operatives that hold partial ownership of the business in which the co-op's members are employed. Because of its share capital, the co-operative may participate in the management of the business and the workers may influence work organization. Examples: production and manufacturing, technology, etc.

OTHER TYPES OF CO-OP ORGANIZATION

Multi-stakeholder, or hybrid, co-operatives: The membership of these co-operatives is made of different categories of members who share a common interest in the organization. Examples: home care services, health services, community services, etc. A particularly successful form of multi-stakeholder co-operative is the Italian "social co-operative," of which some 5,000 exist. Some bring together providers and beneficiaries of a social service as members. Others include permanent workers and previously unemployed people who wish to integrate into the labour market.

New Generation Co-ops have a different structure from most others, and are based on a group of growers or suppliers contracting to have a certain volume of product processed by the co-op. www.coop-studies.usask.ca/NGC/

- Select or closed membership linked to delivery rights
- par and non par value shares
- equity raised through sale of delivery right shares
- formal contract/agreement between member and co-op
- participation in remaining property upon dissolution

A USA VIEW OF CO-OP ORGANIZATION

The 4H organization <http://cooperative.n4h.org/Types.asp> describes the 3 main types of Co-operatives:

- They can **market** members' products to others.
- They can **purchase** supplies and goods and sell them at a reduced price to members.
- They can provide needed **services**.

THE VIEW OF CO-OP ORGANIZATION FROM MALTA

www.education.gov.mt/employment/coops/archives/types_of_coops.htm The Ministry of Education of Malta provides the following information about the three broad categories of co-ops:

Members form **Producer Co-operatives** to handle the sales of their produce. Examples of producer co-operatives are agriculture, fisheries, pig-breeders, milk and wine producers. The co-operative collects the products from all its members, and strives to sell them at the best price.

Members form **Consumer Co-operatives** to buy products in bulk, then resell these products to members at a lower price than other outlets.

The members of **Worker co-operatives** are also the workers. The purpose of the co-operative is to provide employment. In some worker co-operatives, the members get all their work from the co-operative. In others, members may perform work partly as self-employed and partly as members of the co-operative. Amongst these co-operatives are haulage contractors, tugboats, public cleansing, minibuses and coaches.

Note. Malta is not listed on the ICA website, but you can add it to your list or globe of co-operating countries.

A VIEW OF CO-OP ORGANIZATION FROM THE UK

www.sundancerenewables.org.uk/coopt.html Sundance in the United Kingdom uses these definitions:

Worker Co-operatives are businesses owned and controlled by the people who work in them. The workers share the responsibilities and rewards, and a co-operative often provides a safer environment than self-employment. Setting up a co-operative can sometimes provide an alternative to redundancy or closure of a business, and a way to start a new venture.

Service or Marketing Co-operatives self produce services or goods on behalf of their members. These are a way for small businesses to come together to take on projects that they could not manage themselves.

Food Co-operatives enable people to buy cheaper, better quality food by using their purchasing power. This can be for vegetables from a wholesaler, wholefoods or staple items that can be bought cheaper in bulk.

Housing Co-operatives provide housing for their members, and are controlled by the people who live in them. They often provide housing for people who are low priority for local authority housing or who are not eligible for, or do not want to take out a mortgage.

Community Businesses are owned and controlled by people in the community. They provide a facility or service for the benefit of the community such as improving the local environment, offering training or employment opportunities, or providing a service.

Credit Unions are savings and loan organizations operated by the people who use them. They offer affordable credit to their members. They offer affordable credit to their members and are an alternative to expensive loans and encourage people to save regularly, even if it is only a small amount.

Social Firms give priority to people who would find it especially difficult to find employment. They may specialise in providing opportunities for people with a learning disability, or for sufferers of an illness.

WIN-WIN
CASE FOR
CO-OPS
click here



Ideas for your work on co-op types and organization

Prepare a presentation on how co-ops differ from other types of incorporation and the advantages and disadvantages of co-ops.

*Contact a co-op in your area, find one on the internet, or use one from **WIN-WIN CASE FOR CO-OPS**. Decide what type of co-op it is and describe how the members benefit from being part of the co-op. Prepare a presentation on the various types of co-op organization so that it would be clear to someone who has no previous knowledge of co-ops.*

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE - A CANADIAN "CO-OP RICH" SECTOR

A walk round any community market, or internet search under "agricultural co-operatives Canada" and then under co-operatives in any other sector, quickly show that the agri-food sector is highly co-operative, in sub-sectors from gathering to growing to processing and distribution.

In the flower sector:

www.bcfarmnet.org/index.php/resource/338 United Flower Growers' Co-op

www.ufgca.com/homepage/subpages/Auction.html

bcics.uvic.ca/galleria/bc.php?group=44&tourtype=4&story=10

www.ontarioflowers.com/ Ontario Flower Growers (Co-Operative Ltd. & Inc.)

In livestock: <http://www.bclivestock.bc.ca/contact.php> for the BC Livestock Co-op

An article about the Kootenay Country Store Co-operative “the heart of Nelson” gives some useful comments about the whole agri-food co-op sector, and others give information about individual co-ops

<http://cooperativegrocer.coop/articles/index.php?id=397>

www.gvofc.hub.org/ Glen Valley Organic Farm Co-op, Abbotsford

<http://organics.bc.ca/modules/xdirectory/singlelink.php?cid=4&lid=110> Fraser Common Farm Co-o

www.ottercoop.com/ Otter Co-op serving the farmers and the community

Growing Circle Co-op www.bcfarmnet.org/index.php/resource/141 and

http://www.learningcentre.coop/co-ops_featured.php

http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca/food_directory/?q=taxonomy/view/or/6 Lifecycles' Good Food Directory

And for studies and information about starting and financing agricultural co-operatives:

- www.coop-studies.usask.ca/research/past_research/ngcprocessing.php New Generation Co-ops: Opportunities in Agricultural Processing
- www.agf.gov.bc.ca/busmgmt/bus_arrange/cooperative.htm A Start-up guide and a Financing guide for Agricultural Co-operatives
- www.coopscanada.coop/aboutcca/projects/card/ Canadian Co-op Association study on Agricultural Co-operatives
- www.coopscanada.coop/aboutcoop/cancoopsectorprofiles/agriculture/ excellent CCA overview of agri-foods co-ops

http://cooperativegrocer.coop/coops/index.php?module=view_all for a long (298 entries) list of food co-ops in Canada and the USA.



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE - A "CO-OP RICH" SECTOR BEYOND CANADA

The prevalence of co-ops in the agri-food sector is reflected in searches under "farm co-ops" and "agri co-ops" with results from around the world.

South Africa www.nda.agric.za/docs/Digest2000/Digest15.htm

The National Agricultural Co-operative Federation of Korea was established to enhance the social and economic status of member farmers and balance the development of the economy.

www.nonghyup.com/eng/about/message.jsp

In 1966 the government of Thailand established the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives as a state enterprise under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance.

www.baac.or.th/eng_baac/about/history/history.htm

The Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Japan represents the interests of Japanese farmers and their agricultural co-operative organizations. www.e-zenchu-ja.org/index.htm

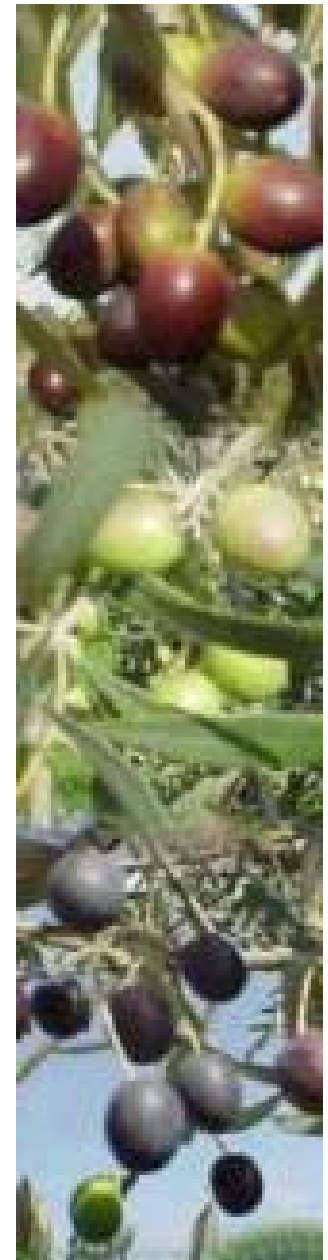
www.wisc.edu/uwcc/icic/orgs/ica/mem/country/denmark/ag-coops.html published "The Agricultural Co-operatives in Denmark"

www.sitiacoop.gr/en/ The Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of the province of Sita, Crete, focuses on olive oil and wine.

Individual co-ops and co-op organizations, and government support for co-ops abound in the USA, some helping co-ops in developing countries.

- the Hazelnut Growers co-operative of Oregon www.hazelnutgrowers.com/
- in Stelle, Illinois, a community garden co-op and a Monday dinner co-op! <http://stellecommunity.com/co-operatives.htm>
- a great list of US co-ops with a high proportion in the agri-food sector United States Department of Agriculture rural Business Co-operative Service www.coopdirectory.org/directory.htm
- From the US Department of Agriculture:
 - Marketing Coordination in Agricultural Co-operatives www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/rr159.pdf and
 - Agricultural Co-operatives in the 21st century www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/cir-60.pdf
- www.ncfc.org/ National Council of Farmer Co-operatives of the USA

<http://www.acdivoca.org/acdivoca/acdiweb2.nsf/acdivoca?OpenPage> In 1997 the Agricultural Co-operative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Co-operative Assistance of the USA merged. Today ACDI/VOCA implements global value-chain and business competitiveness projects, primarily in agribusiness.



IDEAS FOR YOUR WORK ON A "CO-OP RICH" SECTOR

List 5 - 10 co-ops in your area. What sectors are represented by several co-ops? Why would this happen? Have any of them supported the development of other co-ops, or been supported in their early stages?

Look at how the earliest co-ops started in a "co-op rich" sector. What is it about the sector that made the establishment of co-ops particularly logical? Do the same factors exist today with the same implications?

The Worker Ownership Institute suggests three distinguishing features of successful worker-owned companies:

1. Firms that are substantially employee owned, and which involve their employees in decisions, systematically outperform their conventional competitors.
2. Employee ownership is part of a successful strategy to anchor capital in high wage areas.
3. Employee-owned firms tend to secure jobs, both because they prioritize jobs and because they appear to have higher rates of reinvestment than comparable conventional firms.

Explain why you agree or disagree with these suggestions. Comment on whether they seem to be particularly relevant to the co-ops you have studied in a co-op rich sector.

IDEAS FOR YOUR WORK ON THE BIG PICTURE

How has your work on these topics changed your view of co-ops?

How will you be able to inform others about the benefits to themselves and their community if they become involved in co-ops?

How can communities and individuals use their understanding of co-ops for the benefit of their local community and for the larger scale community?

QUIZ ON A WIN-WIN CO-OP WORLD







Discussing why an answer might be right or wrong is as important as the answer itself.		a	b	c	d
1	In Canada there are a) no co-ops b) over 10,000 co-ops c) 47 co-ops d) 20,000 co-ops				
2	Co-ops of the modern type started in a) Sweden in 1602 b) the USA in 1987 c) the UK in 1844 d) in Israel in 1950				
3	The co-op movement in Canada was started by a) Alphonse and Dorimène Desjardins in 1920 b) Fr. Moses Coady and Fr. Jimmy Tompkins in Atlantic Canada c) the early Canadian workers in co-ops d) all of these				
4	Co-ops operate in a) Canada only b) only in English and French speaking countries c) in most countries d) only in British Columbia				
5	Co-ops can be operated by and for the benefit of a) workers b) buyers c) users of services d) all of these				
6	How many International Principles guide the members of co-ops? a) 7 b) 183 c) 4 d) 29				
7	In a co-op, decision-making power is based on a) the amount of money you invest b) simply being a member c) how long you have worked in the co-op d) the number of shares you own				
8	Membership in co-ops is a) compulsory b) voluntary c) non-discriminatory d) both b and c				
9	To have the right to call itself a "Co-op" a business in only British Columbia a) must incorporate legally under the Canada Co-op Act b) does not have to incorporate c) must incorporate under the Co-operative Associations Act of this province d) all of these				
10	Co-op members respect the values of a) self-help b) democracy c) equality, equity, and solidarity d) all of these				

QUIZ ANSWERS FROM **A WIN-WIN CO-OP WORLD**

1	In Canada there are a) no co-ops b) over 10,000 co-ops c) 47 co-ops d) 20,000 co-ops
2	Co-ops of the modern type started in a) Sweden in 1602 b) the USA in 1987 c) the UK in 1844 d) in Israel in 1950
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4	Co-ops operate in a) Canada only b) only in English and French speaking countries c) in most countries d) only in BC
5	Co-ops can be operated by and for the benefit of a) workers b) buyers c) users of services d) all of these
6	How many International Principles guide the members of co-ops? a) 7 b) 183 c) 4 d) 29
7	In a co-op, decision-making power is based on a) the amount of money you invest b) simply being a member c) how long you have worked in the co-op d) the number of shares you own
8	Membership in co-ops is a) compulsory b) voluntary c) non-discriminatory d) both b and c
9	To call itself a "Co-op" a business operating in only British Columbia a) must incorporate legally under the Canada Co-op Act b) does not have to incorporate c) must incorporate legally under the Co-operative Associations Act of this province d) all of these
10	Co-op members respect the values of a) self-help b) democracy c) equality, equity, and solidarity d) all of these

To move ahead, go back to any of the activities you have not done in this module, or click on any other module.

WIN – WIN INDEX

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Click here  for WIN-WIN GAMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starter games - Co-op Quiz - Cell Net - Peak Performance - Decision making games 	What is a Co-op? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definitions - Values - Principles Co-operation around the world: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A short history - The Co-op community today - Association and government support 	Some Co-op basics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definitions - Principles Comparison with other forms of incorporation The Co-op sector in Canada and British Columbia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal Co-ops - Credit Unions and Caisse Populaires - Co-ops in BC today - A Co-op rich community 	Co-op essentials Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building membership - Connections with the geographic community, its sector, and the co-op community - Being part of the Co-op movement - Integrating the 7 Principles 	Why a Co-op future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values and Principles - The rewards Consumer co-ops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You as a purchaser - You as a member/ owner Worker co-ops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You as member/owner/ worker/employer - Connecting with other worker co-ops
Click here  for WIN-WIN TOOLS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision-making activities - Glossary - Resources - Work-plan and evaluation templates - Sample Lesson Plans 	Co-ops in Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early days - Canada today - British Columbia Co-op community - Incorporation in BC Types of Co-ops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work - Organization - A “Co-op rich” sector 	BC Case studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adrenalin Motorcycle Co-op - Nelson & District Credit Union - North Coast Artists’ Co-op Impact of Co-ops on the economy Keys to Co-op success and failure	The legal process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporation - Dissolution - "Rules, Policy and Practice" The business aspects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning - Plans into action - Keeping a Co-op healthy Watching for dangers, minimising risk	The bigger picture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other types of co-ops - Community impact and connections - Community Economic Development, "Buying Local" and corporate ethics Further Education Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Associations and the Co-op Sector - Post-secondary and adult education



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WIN-WIN INTRODUCTION & INDEX 