Co-operatives and the Journey of Lifelong Learning

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The project

• Explore the 5\textsuperscript{th} principle of co-operation
• Scan educational and training initiatives across Canada by co-ops and/or for co-ops
• Explore the investment co-ops make in their people through education and training
• Inform practice (trends, gaps, inform the development of a co-op lifelong learning strategy)
Contributors

- Karen Miner of Saint Mary’s University
- Kim Penna of College Houses, Texas
- Sarah Pike of ACE
- Fiona Duguid of CCA
- Quintin Fox of Gay Lea Foods (formerly of CCA)
- Provincial co-op associations
Methodology

• Scan co-op websites and annual reports
• Requested submissions via co-op newsletters and through email requests
• Consulted with provincial associations
• Inclusion criteria:
  – Educational or training initiatives undertaken by co-ops or created specifically for co-ops
  – Courses, workshops, online learning initiatives, resources/toolkits, etc
  – Ongoing initiative (not 1-off conferences)
  – Practitioner focused (not undergraduate courses)
Overview of findings

- 164 initiatives found
- Across all sectors
- Delivered by primary, second tier and third tier co-ops as well as consulting bodies and universities
- Delivery methods ranged from online static resources to in-person courses
- Initiatives targeted staff, management, directors, members, developers and the public
- Topics included co-op topics as well as technical topics
Types of initiatives

- Course/workshop/program: 85 (52%)
- Online courses/programs: 15
- Resources/materials/tools/publications: 15
- Conference/forum: 9
- Online resource portal: 9
- Internship: 9
- Camps/retreats: 7
- One on one advising: 4
- Mentorship: 3
- Mixed: 3
- Exchange network: 2
- Webinars: 2
- Video: 1
RESOURCE
Public school curriculum, On Co-op

• *All 4 Each*: A unit to inspire a co-operative conscience
COURSE
Graduate Diploma in Co-operative Management

• Targeted at existing managers or senior staff
• Saint Mary’s University
• 16-20 months
• In person orientation, online courses, personal project

SOBEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS at SAINT MARY’S UNIVERSITY
Topics

• Technical versus co-operative (philosophy and technical)
  – 34 not co-op-related (Financial Literacy in the North, impact! The Co-operators Youth Program for Sustainability Leadership)
  – 130 from a co-op lens or directly on co-operative philosophy/business/principles (The Co-op Difference: Training in Co-op Housing Management, youth camps, Co-operative Corporate Secretaries Conference)
Who is investing in education?

- Second tier co-ops
- Third tier co-ops
- Primary co-ops
- Consultants
- Universities
- Other
In summary

• More formalized programs that feed the governance function than other audiences
• Second tier co-ops and federations play a large role in providing education and training
• Implications for the sector
• Co-ops are educating on the ‘co-op difference’
• Reporting bias
Opportunities: Lifelong learning strategy

• Strategize about opportunities where co-ops and co-op associations should collaborate to build capacity within the sector, share resources, set common standards
• Gap between high school and adult education (opportunity to target business schools and college students)
• Public education a priority
• Access to governance resources for smaller co-ops
National co-op governance initiatives

• Convening co-ops who are leaders in educating directors
• National Co-operative Governance Governance Portal
• National curriculum/tools/resources/standard
  – Access for smaller co-ops
Next steps

- Paper soon available
- Explore university-based learning opportunities
- Mapping education with Christine Clamp
- Analysis with ACE
- Continuing discussions with sector

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