



# Measuring the Impact of Credit Unions on Wealth Building in Communities:

## Preliminary Findings on the Impact of Affinity Credit Union's Community Investment Programs

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### Introduction

Many co-operative studies scholars and co-op practitioners believe that successful co-operative businesses benefit their communities, create wealth and help their members accumulate wealth and/or assets. We applied this notion to credit unions and explored whether or not credit unions provide unique measurable benefits to all stakeholders. In addition, there is concern about the growing similarities between co-operatives and their private sector counterparts. Co-operatives play an important role in our organization-based economy because they provide the “co-operative advantage”, which means they are attentive to local community and individual needs in a unique way because of their democratic structure and because they operate using a set of principles that stress equity, participation, self-reliance and transparency. This is achieved in part through adherence to the pillars of the co-operative enterprise: the Rochdale Principles (see Figure 1). One way to measure the cooperative difference or advantage is to evaluate co-ops' adherence to, and the extent to which a co-operative practices, any of the Rochdale Principles.

This study explores the many ways that credit unions benefit their members and their communities, with the objective of documenting and measuring the impacts of their programs and services on members' wellbeing, financial stability, wealth-building, skill development, civic engagement, and overall community economic development. We analyzed community impact studies and indicators to identify possible indicators of community impact.

# Cooperative Principles

*Adopted in 1996 by the International Cooperative Alliance*



Figure 1. Rochdale Principles.

Source: Keystone Development Centre. *Getting Started: About Co-ops: Co-op Principles*. Retrieved from [http://www.kdc.coop/resources/getting\\_started/about\\_co\\_ops/co\\_op\\_principles/](http://www.kdc.coop/resources/getting_started/about_co_ops/co_op_principles/)

## *Indicators*

We began to identify and test a set of traditional and nontraditional, market as well as non-market, economic and social indicators that would increase our understanding of the broad impacts of credit unions on their local economy, including impacts that circulate multiple times within a community. See Appendix 1 for a table of our initial indicators and what we expect them to help measure. In the first phase of our study we conducted extensive interviews and focus groups with senior management, board members and general members of a middle sized credit union (which has now merged with Affinity Credit Union) about their credit union's services, practices and policies based on our indicator table.

In the second phase, we worked closely with top management at Affinity Credit Union to refine the questions from the first pilot study to create a survey instrument that would

continue to probe into our research questions and utilize the variety of indicators we had been refining. In the summer of 2012 we had the opportunity to include a subset of these scale items in a province-wide survey of credit unions. The results from the survey reveal that there is a perception among many of the members that Affinity’s community economic development initiatives are valuable and have a positive impact on the communities within which the credit union is located.

Many, especially higher income members felt that their credit union should be doing even more to support community well-being. We also found that programs targeting lower income and/or vulnerable members of communities were helping member to feel more empowered, to access services they would not obtain from other financial institutions, and to move toward achieving their financial goals. They viewed their membership in the credit union as even more valuable than the higher income members. Our next step was to focus on the credit union’s community economic development initiatives and programs to understand how the participants/recipients judge the impact.

For this third phase of our study, we explored community impacts more deeply. We chose to focus on the seventh Rochdale Principle, concern for the community. We refined our original indicators to measure how much Affinity Credit Union adheres to this principle through their community investment programs. The chosen indicators are shown in Figure 2 and can be used to assess the community impact of any type of co-op.

Indicator heading	Indicator sub-heading
<b>Community involvement</b>	Social Investment
	Scholarships
	Policy advocacy
<b>Community Economic Development</b>	Enterprise development
	Financial Services
	Community Programs
	Local procurement
	Affordable housing

<b>Indicator heading</b>	<b>Indicator sub-heading</b>
	Micro-lending
<b>Service Provision</b>	Diversity
	High Quality
	Professionalism
	Innovations
	Personalized
	Only financial institution
<b>Skills and Leadership Development</b>	Training programs –staff and member, member participation at AGM, member participation on Board of Directors
<b>Employment</b>	Salaries
	Benefits
	Hiring practices
<b>Environment and Sustainability</b>	Green buildings
	Recycling

**Figure 2:** Community impact indicators

**Source:** Modified from Gordon Nembhard, J., & Hammond Ketilson, L. (2014). Identifying the Appropriate Indicators to Measure the Impact of Credit Unions and other Cooperatives on their Communities.

### *Empirical testing*

We partnered with Affinity Credit Union to test the proposed indicators. Working closely with Affinity staff, we agreed to focus this phase on Affinity's five community investment programs:

1. the Individual Development Account (IDA) program,
2. the District Council funding program,
3. the Community Loans program,
4. the Microloans programs,
5. the Accessible Housing programs.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the indicators were less relevant to the community investment programs, so the list of indicators was once again winnowed, and only the first three indicators listed in figure 2 were tested. See Appendix 2 for examples of the types of questions we asked.

The IDA program is targeted towards selected high school students who are at risk of dropping out, although immigrant students are increasingly represented in the program. It offers a weekly class that teaches participants skills such as resume writing, applying for jobs, employee self-advocacy, saving money, and setting up a bank account. At the end of the program, participants transfer the income that they have saved into a bank account, and Affinity doubles their savings or matches it 1:1 depending on the year.

Representatives of Affinity Credit Union identified and contacted former participants in the program, and a focus group was organized to ask them about their experiences in the program and its outcomes. Each question was answered by at least three former program participants as part of a broader discussion. The focus group lasted about one hour and ten minutes, after which each participant was given a \$50 honorarium and Affinity-themed gifts such as flash drives and water bottles.

Whereas Affinity's IDA program is limited to Saskatoon, its District Council Funding is province-wide. A certain amount of funding is allocated to the Saskatchewan regional districts for community programs considered by the District Representative and decided upon by the District Council. These programs reflect the four pillars central to Affinity's strategic plan: Community Assets & Facilities, Economic Self-Reliance, Environment, Local Economic Development, and Other.

Funded programs include repairs, construction, or equipment for recreational, entertainment, senior, health, cultural and library facilities and transportation; youth programs for agricultural education, First Nations culture, food preparation, homework help or art classes for the urban poor; and park development, competitions, and theatre programs. With help from Affinity representatives, a list of District Council fund recipient contacts was created for recruitment purposes. The sample chosen reflected the proportion of funds awarded to every pillar and district. Recruitment emails were sent out in waves, first in September, then twice in January.

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<sup>1</sup> The research is ongoing, and no data exists yet for the last two groups.

Those who had not responded to the emails were telephoned in January. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately 20 minutes. The interviews captured descriptions of the funded programs, how the funding was obtained, impacts of the funding, and - for those who obtained funding from the District Council previously and who were Affinity members - evaluations of the District Council funding program.

Community loans target community-oriented not-for-profit organizations with loans that are more affordable than conventional options. They are provided to organizations across the province and are considered on a case-by-case basis rather than by district. Affinity requires permission from the organizations to release their contact information, so the ongoing recruitment process is performed by an Affinity representative.

The list of potential participants was created in August 2014 by the same representative who helped to design this study, but actual recruitment was delayed until April 2015 due to changes in personnel and research assistant time constraints. In-person semi-structured interviews were conducted with executives from organizations that have received a Community Loan from Affinity, and took place at the organizations' headquarters. The interviews covered similar themes to the district council interviews: description of the organization and of projects that benefited from the funding, impacts of the organization on the targeted community and the wider population, experience with Affinity, and necessity of funding.

## **Methodology and Results**

### **IDA**

The IDA focus group was held at Affinity headquarters and consisted of six former program participants, the program coordinator who offered clarification but otherwise did not participate, the principal investigator, and a research assistant. Backgrounds of the former program participants included First Nations, immigrant, and local, and they all participated in the program in the same year (2010-2011).

### *Outcomes*

In accordance with the program's goals, participants noted that they gained employment and retained knowledge and skills related to employment and financial literacy. Through the savings and matching part of the program, participants obtained money for which some paid for a car or a down payment on an apartment. The program coordinator also serves as a "lifetime reference" for participants during and after the program.

### *If not for the program...*

The program impacted the participants' long-term comportment and worldview. One participant noticed that he was more "responsible and dependable"; another reported that the program allowed him to become future-oriented: "[I wouldn't have gotten] more organized in my life and look into my future and that's probably one of the reason why I went to university after high school."; another, who was a recent immigrant when she entered the program, reported that it helped her to adjust to her new surroundings: "...It pushed me to go out there and be open, make friends, and don't be scared, and it helped me a lot with the culture too."

### *Wider Impacts*

The benefits extended beyond the participants to their friends and families. One participant highlighted the value of “caring and understanding” that he gained through the program. He also reported that he could act as a leader during the program sessions because he had more work experience than most of his peers. Others reported that by saving they were able to give their family members money when they needed it, or, in one case, to sell their parents a car on a flexible repayment schedule. Many participants also helped others to budget their money or to create their resumes. Some of their friends have participated in the program at their recommendation; one participant has assigned herself a mentorship role to two such friends, and reported that she hopes everyone who she helps with the knowledge she learned will share the knowledge with others.

Some of the participants have since obtained at least some post-secondary education, one of whom was involved in organizing local participation at a national Aboriginal youth leadership program and wants to use her education in IT to gain employment in the mining sector. Another participant is an entrepreneur that is looking to start a new company in addition to his existing one. The last participant with some university education is seeking employment in the banking sector, preferably at Affinity. Of the others, two want to become managers at the companies at which they currently have supervisory roles, a drug store and a coffee shop, and the last participant wants to be an entrepreneur and a nurse.

### District Council Funding

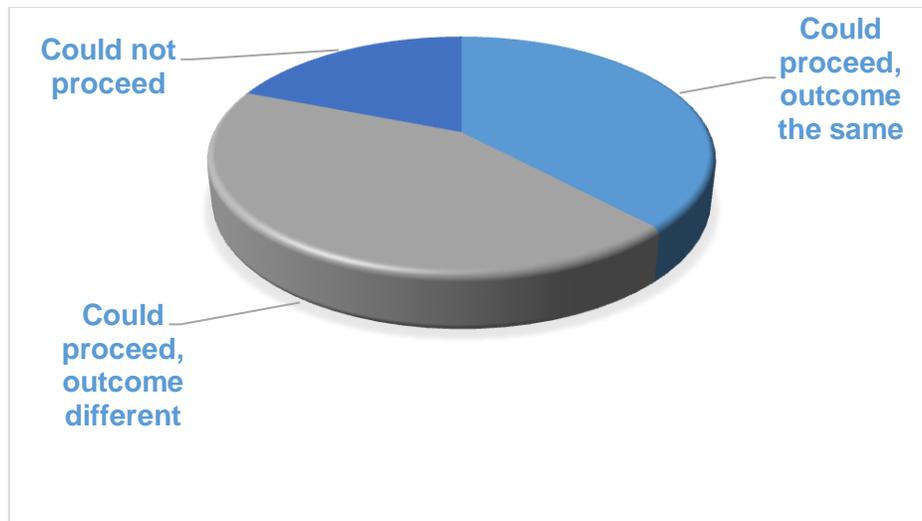
A total of 16 interviews were conducted for the District Council Funding portion of the project. The ‘Community Assets’ pillar was most heavily represented (n=8), followed by that of ‘Economic Self-Reliance / Inclusion’ (n = 4), and ‘Local Economic Development’ (n=2). Only one represented the ‘Environment’ pillar (n=1), and no organizations (n=0) in the ‘Others’ pillar were represented in the sample. The district representing the Saskatoon area was most represented (n=5), followed by the one encompassing Dalmeny and Martinsville (n=3), then those encompassing Simpson and Davidson (n=2) and Regina (n=2), and one interview from the district encompassing Hague, Osler, and Rosthern (n=1). There was no representation for the district representing Leask and Shellbrook, nor the one representing Last Oak, Borden and Bellevue.

### *Outcomes*

The sample was diverse, therefore the funding was likewise used in a variety of ways. Some participants reported that they were able to start a project, like a senior’s residence complex. Others were able to continue a program in the way that they thought best benefited the community (ie. safely, effectively, long-term, and/or widely), such as hands-on teaching about agriculture in the classroom or a well-equipped fire department. A third group was able to maintain a venue of significance to a small municipality such as a recreational centre complete with a skating rink that was used for a myriad of community functions including weekly mass.

### *If not for the funding...*

Five participants (38%) stated that they could have proceeded without the funding and the outcome would be the same, although it would have taken more effort to raise the funds from other sources. Six other participants (43%) reported that their organizations could have proceeded without the funding, but they would have had to change something such as the scale or quality of services, or increase the registration fees to the point of unaffordability for some of their patrons. The remaining three participants (19%) noted that they would not have been able to proceed with the project without the funding. See Figure 3 for an illustration of these results.



**Figure 3:** Responses to what participants would have done if their project had not received District Council funding  
**Source:** Taras, V., Hammond Ketilson, L, Gordon Nembhard, J., Hewitt, M. (2015). *Measuring the Impact of Credit Unions on Wealth Building in Communities: Preliminary Findings*. Presented at the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operatives Conference at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Ottawa, ON.

### *Wider impacts*

Similar to the variety of outcomes, a variety of impacts from the funding were reported. In the cases where construction was involved, it was reported that it brought the community together through volunteer labour, by creating or maintaining a space for the community to gather, or as a way for the community to otherwise engage around a new project. One project promoted tourism to a small municipality by drawing talent from across Canada to perform quality theatre productions. The programs in urban areas targeted youth, and led to the pursuit of higher education and careers, more self-confidence and self-esteem, and empowerment. In some cases the funding allowed the commencement of a larger project. Finally, some projects promoted cultural knowledge, skills, and pride by teaching aboriginal youth to lead traditional ceremonies or through organizing a sports competition for them.

## Community Loans

Three representatives of organizations that received funding from the Community Loans program have been interviewed to date: one organization works with underprivileged youth, another is a community theatre, and the third interviewee represented three organizations that work together to improve Saskatoon's poorest neighbourhood. The interviews lasted from around 20 minutes to around one hour. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

### *Outcomes*

The loans were mostly used for mortgages on buildings that were used as organization headquarters or on housing projects such as low-income housing co-ops and transitional housing for young offenders and young mothers. A line of credit was also held for a grocery store co-op in an inner-city neighbourhood. It should be noted that all organizations received funding in different ways including smaller loans for projects or operational costs, as well as sponsorships and grants. All participants were uncertain about which branch of the community investment programs their funding originated from for their various projects. Instead, they spoke about their experience with the people at Affinity who helped them obtain the funding.

### *If not for the funding...*

Because the sample size is so small, the interviews will be treated as case studies. Two of the three participants never conceived of the credit union being unable to provide funding because it had previously been eager and able to help. One of those talked about an attempt to diversify the organization's funding sources by approaching a bank for funding on a project, but he learned that banks are not equipped to deal with non-profits as well as credit unions. The third participant did have an experience where the credit union was not as reliable as it had been before and since, and reported a conversation he had with his board of directors about switching to a different financial service provider. He told them that because they had a relationship with Affinity the solution was to fix the relationship rather than give up on it, which he proceeded to do.

### *Wider Impacts*

The two participants who represented organizations that targeted the inner-city mentioned that helping the most vulnerable component of a city improves "the health and wellbeing of the whole city". They both also mentioned that their projects brought awareness, either through activities intended to promote it or by challenging the perception of an inner-city neighbourhood as a space unworthy of major investment with the construction of a beautiful open-concept building in its core. One of those participants also noticed a snowball effect through the organization's activities within the community whereby those who were not engaged in their programs would be motivated to participate or seek help by watching those who were engaged in their programs. The third participant was able to create a space that hosts events for every demographic in the city.

### *Effect of Credit Union Growth*

Affinity recently grew from serving Saskatoon and surroundings to the whole of Saskatchewan. Although they were not questioned about this, two participants mentioned how this growth impacted them and their organizations. The first talked about the sudden increase in fees associated with the loan – the fees were immediately removed when he pointed it out to Affinity – which, he was told, was a result of re-organization within the credit union as a result of the growth. He supposed that the oversight was because “the discussions on the [credit union] board become a much bigger discussion than the needs of the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon...”

The second participant provided a warning to Affinity that it is at risk of losing their co-operative advantage. He explained that he chooses the credit union because of the welcoming and respectful ambiance, as well as the personal relationships he is able to foster with the staff. However, he says “they’ve grown at such a rate that they are starting to have some of those bigger corporate problems” such as high employee turnover and upselling. He suggested that they choose their employees carefully and “foster [employees] who want to stay there”.

## **Summary of Results**

Every participant had a positive reaction to the Affinity community investment program about which they were asked. The constructive criticism that was voiced was overwhelmed by satisfaction, which was derived from the direct impact it had on the participants’ lives, projects, or organizations. Although some had to pause to think about the community impacts when asked about them, every participant was able to list several including multiplier effects.

The indicators appear to provide a useful tool for the evaluation of the community impacts of co-ops. Some of the questions were less helpful because the participant did not have sufficient knowledge about the community investment programs, and they were removed from subsequent interview stages. Revisiting the indicators that were used, as shown in Figure 4, Affinity demonstrates important impact with regard to almost every one.

<b>Indicator heading</b>	<b>Indicator sub-heading</b>	<b>Impact Demonstrated Through</b>
<b>Community involvement</b>	Social Investment	Seniors residence complex (DC) <sup>2</sup> ; fire department fully equipped (DC); recreation complex (DC); low-income housing (CL); community theatre (CL); organizational headquarters (CL); summer theatre (DC); playschool (DC); library (DC); intergenerational park (DC)

<sup>2</sup> Funding was provided by District Council (DC) where decision is made locally or Community Loan (CL) where decision is made centrally

Indicator heading	Indicator sub-heading	Impact Demonstrated Through
	Scholarships	Not Applicable <sup>3</sup>
	Policy advocacy	Not Applicable
<b>Community Economic Development</b>	Enterprise development	Organizational headquarters (CL); community theatre (CL); small town moving theatre (DC)
	Financial Services	Grocery co-op line of credit (CL); matched savings (IDA <sup>4</sup> ); budgeting skills and financial literacy (IDA); affordable mortgages (CL)
	Community Programs	Employment skills development (IDA); adjustment to immigration (IDA); lifetime reference (IDA); aboriginal theatre program, classroom, agricultural education (DC); urban youth art program (DC); urban children and youth food and literacy programs (DC)
	Local procurement	Not Applicable
	Affordable housing	Low-Income Housing and Transitional Housing for young offenders and young mothers (CL)
	Micro-lending	One of Affinity's community investment programs involves micro-lending to small businesses. Findings concerning this program are forthcoming

<sup>3</sup> Some of the questions were less useful because the participant did not have sufficient knowledge about the community investment programs, and were removed from subsequent interview stages.

<sup>4</sup> Individual Development Account

Indicator heading	Indicator sub-heading	Impact Demonstrated Through
Service Provision	Diversity	Serve youth in low income neighborhoods; provide programs for First Nations and immigrant groups
	High Quality	Overall positive feedback from participants about Affinity's community investment programs
	Professionalism	Overall positive feedback from participants about Affinity's community investment programs
	Innovations	Not Applicable
	Personalized <sup>5</sup>	
	Only financial institution <sup>6</sup>	

**Figure 4:** Assessment of Affinity's community investment programs

## Conclusions

A set of indicators was created for the purpose of assessing the impact of co-operatives on their communities. The indicators were initially identified through a review of the community impact literature and refined through a pilot study of Advantage Credit Union. A subsequent empirical study was conducted using some of the indicators to assess the impact of Affinity Credit Union on its Saskatchewan communities, a partner in the study design and participant recruitment, as well as the dissemination of findings,. The study focused on Affinity's community investment programs. The programs provide funding to community projects; affordable loans to organizations, small businesses, and individuals who would not qualify for a loan otherwise or could not afford it; and a program for youth financial literacy and employment skills. A focus group, a telephone survey, and in-person interviews were conducted with individuals who benefited personally or as part of an organization as a result of the community investment programs.

<sup>5</sup> This category is met by all the community investment projects except for the District Council funds.

<sup>6</sup> None of the District Council fund recipients were funded by Affinity alone, although some of the other funding was contingent on the funding they received from Affinity.

Although the study is ongoing, our preliminary findings show that Affinity demonstrated important or differential impact on most of the indicators. Those where it does not either refer to activities within Affinity that do not impact the wider community, or that apply to all the community investment programs except the District Council funds.

This phase of the study demonstrates that Affinity does adhere to the seventh Rochdale Principle, concern for the community. And although it has not lost its co-operative advantage, it must remain vigilant to maintain it.

## Appendix 1: Original Indicators Table

Types of impact	Types of indicators	Specific indicators	Questions
Community Involvement	Investments Donations In kind donations Sponsorships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of in-kind /donations</li> <li>• Recipients:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural groups</li> <li>• sports groups</li> <li>• other local clubs, organizations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much does the CU donate as a percentage of profits?</li> <li>• Please list all the community activities the CU was involved with or donated to in the past 6 months? Is this typical for a six-month period?</li> <li>• How many organizations have benefited from donations from the CU over the past year?</li> <li>• What types of organizations have received donations?</li> <li>• What about sponsorships?</li> </ul>
	Scholarships/ Bursaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of Scholarships /Bursaries</li> <li>• Types of scholarships. I.e. do they focus on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On marginalized groups?</li> <li>- Different educational institutions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many scholarships or bursaries does the CU award each year? What is the amount of these scholarships?</li> <li>• Do you award these to specific groups of people (low income, residence of community)?</li> <li>• Are members of branches eligible for these awards?</li> </ul>
	Student Placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of summer students</li> <li>• Positions for young employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you offer summer positions at the CU?</li> <li>• Do you have graduate recruitment programs?</li> </ul>
	Promoting the community as a good place to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising/promotional material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how your credit union promotes the community</li> </ul>
	Improving the image of the community and/or branch communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how the CU works to improve the image of the community.</li> </ul>
	Volunteerism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer hours within work hour</li> <li>• Volunteer hours outside work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you or do you know of CU staff that volunteer in community activities?</li> <li>• Does the CU allow for employees to volunteer during work hours? How many hours can they volunteer as part of work?</li> </ul>

Types of impact	Types of indicators	Specific indicators	Questions
	Participation in groups/clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of staff that participate on local boards or committees</li> <li>• Number of staff that provide financial and management expertise to local clubs or organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you know of any CU employees that sit on other boards or committees in the community</li> <li>• Do you or other employees offer your expertise to clubs or organizations?</li> </ul>
	Fundraising activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of fundraising activities in the past year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the CU participate in fundraising activities? If so, what were they for? What was the extend of the CU's involvement?</li> </ul>
	Policy advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific policies or legislation supported/promoted by CU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has your credit union been involved in policy advocacy – supporting financial policies or regulations or other legislation (prov. or fed.) that would help your members or the community?</li> </ul>
	Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing / displaying local art</li> <li>• Support or offer cultural programs – painting, music, photography, second language, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does your CU express cultural appreciation? Does it buy and/or display local art?</li> <li>• Does it hire local talent for events/activities (e.g. local bands, musicians, etc.)?</li> <li>• Does your CU support or offer cultural programs in the community?</li> </ul>
Community Economic Development	Encouraging people to start or grow a business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of business start-up in community through CU loans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many business start-ups has your CU been involved with over the past year?</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Multipliers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of employees at new business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many employees does the new business have?</li> </ul>
	Sustaining businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of failed businesses in community over past year</li> <li>• Continuing education programs for staff/owners of established businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you know how many businesses were closed in the past year?</li> <li>• What does the CU do to help keep businesses viable in the community?</li> </ul>
	Financial services to community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower interest rates on loans</li> <li>• Higher interest rates on deposits</li> <li>• Waived service fees for organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the rates of CU compare to rates of competitors (interest rates for loans and deposits)</li> <li>• Does the CU waive or reduce service fees for organizations in the community? How often does this occur</li> </ul>

Types of impact	Types of indicators	Specific indicators	Questions
	Specific community development programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable housing programs</li> <li>Grants to local organizations for specific development projects</li> <li>Programs for disadvantaged /underserved members (disabled, visible minorities, elderly, remote)</li> <li>Training programs</li> <li>Small business micro-lending</li> <li>Special financing for non-profit organizations</li> <li>Mentoring programs</li> <li>New immigrant programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your CU offer any special programs for the community (affordable housing programs, special grants, etc)?</li> <li>Are these offered at all the branches?</li> </ul>
		<b>Multipliers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of disadvantaged that have found employment</li> <li>Number of new living spaces in community</li> </ul>	
	Economic linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount spent on supplies purchased from local businesses</li> <li>Use of local services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where do you buy your supplies? Are there local companies that you try to deal with?</li> <li>What other services do you use that are local (cleaning company, catering, marketing, publishing, etc)?</li> </ul>
		<b>Multiplier:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recirculation of dollar spent by CU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think about how your CU buys local products and uses local services and estimate how many times a dollar spent by the CU re-circulates around the community before leaving. Do the dollars also return to the CU?</li> </ul>
	Examples of helping local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you give examples of how the CU helped out a local business?</li> </ul>	
Service provision	Types / quality of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Savings and Investment instruments</li> <li>Quality of services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please list all the savings and investment products your CU offers.</li> <li>Do these products help your members build assets?</li> <li>What do you think are the most important services your CU provides to its members / community?</li> <li>What does your CU do best? What could it do better?</li> </ul>

Types of impact	Types of indicators	Specific indicators	Questions
	Number of communities served Number of new members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of branches</li> <li>Percentage of community served by CU</li> <li>Increase/decrease in membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many members do you have?</li> </ul>
	Public perception		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do people say about the CU?</li> <li>What makes the CU different than a bank?</li> </ul>
	Personalized service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face-to-face interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it important to you to talk directly to a person? Do you prefer to use the internet?</li> <li>Can you give examples of the CU giving personalized service to its members?</li> </ul>
	Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of complaints from members</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does your CU handle member complaints?</li> <li>How many complaints have you received in the last week or month? What is the average? Are there typical complaints?</li> </ul>
	Unbanked communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of surrounding communities without a financial institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the CU try to do for people in communities without a financial institution</li> </ul>
	Branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of members at branch locations</li> <li>Percentage of branches where CU is only financial institution</li> <li>Number of branch closures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many branches do you have? How many of these are the only financial institution in the community?</li> <li>Has the CU ever closed a branch?</li> </ul>
Skills and leadership development	Participation on board Participation at annual meeting Training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of participants in the programs over last 5 years / over last year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you participate in the annual meeting, elections for board members</li> <li>Have you ever sat on the board or been a committee member? Why or why not?</li> <li>What skills have you developed due to your involvement with the co-op?</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Multiplier:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in other organizations because of involvement in CU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you been involved in other organizations (board member, politics, etc.) because of your involvement with the CU?</li> </ul>

Types of impact	Types of indicators	Specific indicators	Questions
Environment	Environmental programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon neutral programs</li> <li>• Green buildings</li> <li>• Recycling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of green initiatives</li> <li>• Amount of paper saved / recycled</li> <li>• Conservation policies (water, energy)</li> <li>• Participation in community events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your CU have any environmental programs (reduce reuse, recycle)?</li> <li>• Has the CU introduced any carbon neutral programs (planting trees to offset carbon emissions)</li> <li>• Has the CU ever measured its environmental footprint (total impact on environment) ?</li> <li>• What other activities does the CU do related to the environment?</li> </ul>
Employment	Salaries Retirement programs Hiring practices Employee support (childcare, health and dental insurance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of jobs/ number of full-time jobs</li> <li>• How many of these are from the local community?</li> <li>• Number of jobs at branches/ number of full-time employees</li> <li>• Salaries compared to competitors</li> <li>• Benefits</li> <li>• Executive/employee salary ratio</li> <li>• Proportion of visible minorities and women on staff</li> <li>• Proportion of different age groups</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the CU a good place to work?</li> <li>• Has it received any awards or recognition for being a good employer?</li> <li>• How does it compare to other places you have worked?</li> </ul>
		<b>Multiplier:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in quality of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does working for the CU benefit you in other ways (quality of life, confidence, self-esteem, etc)</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 2: Focus Group Interview Schedule**

1. Please tell us your first name and how you heard about the IDA program?
2. What made you interested in participating in the IDA program (how was it described to you)?
3. What kinds of things have you been able to do (achieve, do differently, skills developed) because of your involvement in this program? Have you shared any of the skills you have learned with family or friends?
4. Would you have been able to do this without participating in a program like this?
5. Tell us a little about yourselves – what you would like to be able to do when you finish participating in the IDA program/ What have you done as a result/ What have you done with the money that you saved (prompt for a job, etc.)
6. Are programs like this important? If so why, if no, why not?]
7. Are there things about this program that should be changed? What aspects should be changed? Any obstacles that you encountered that made participation more difficult?
8. What would you say to others about the program? Would you recommend it to others?
9. What do you think of Affinity (or of credit unions) compared to banks?

## **Appendix 3: District Council Fund Interview Schedule**

### *Section A. Nature of the project funded*

1. Please describe the project that has been funded with District Council funds.
2. What procedure did you go through in order to access these funds?
3. If you had not received funding from the District Council, where would you have gone for funding?
4. How likely is it that you would have been able to proceed with the project without receipt of these funds?
5. Has this project had an impact on the community? If so, in what way
6. Have you received funding from the District Council previously?  
If yes: For what kind of project? What kind of impact did that project have on the community?
7. Is your organization a member of Affinity Credit Union?  
If yes, please go Section B.  
If the answer to both questions is no, please go to Section C.

### *Section B. Role of the District Council: Representative Structure*

1. How do you feel about the representative structure of the District Council model? Do you feel that it is working to ensure members' views are taken into account?
2. Is the existing representative structure working as well as it should to ensure a diversity of members' views are taken into account? For example, are the views of the following groups considered?
  - Different geographic regions or local communities
  - urban and rural communities
  - different sizes of branches
  - women
  - ethnic minorities
  - First Nations and Métis people
  - other?
3. What, if anything, could be done to improve the existing representative structure?

### *Section C. Closing questions/comments*

1. Do you have any further comments to add regarding the District Council.

## Appendix 4: Community Loan Interview Schedule

1. Please describe the organization that has received funding from the Affinity loan.
  - a. What population benefits most from the organization?
  - b. Has the organization had an impact on the broader community?
  - c. Who else benefits from the organization?
  - d. How old is your organization?
  
2. Have any projects in particular benefitted from the loan?  
If yes:
  - a. Please describe it/them.
  - b. How do(es) the project(s) benefit the organization?
  - c. How do(es) the project(s) benefit the community?
  
3. What procedure did you go through in order to *access* the loan?
  - a. How did you initially find out about the funding opportunity?
  - b. Did you compare funding opportunities?
  - c. Why did you choose Affinity?
  
4. If you had *not* received the loan, where would you have gone for funding?
  
5. How likely is it that you would have been able to proceed with the project *without* receipt of these funds?
  
6. Has your organization received funding from Affinity previously?
  - a. Was it a loan?
  
7. Is your organization a member of Affinity Credit Union?
  
8. Do you have any feedback on eligibility requirements, application procedure or delivery of the loan?
  
9. Do you have any further comments to add regarding the Community Loans.

## Appendix 5: Microloans Interview Schedule

1. Please describe the business that has received funding from the loan.
  - a. What products or services does it provide?
  - b. Who is your clientele?
  - c. How old is it?
  
2. How did you use the funds from the loan?
  - a. When did you receive the loan?
  - b. What impact did the loan have on your business?
  
3. Who has benefitted from the loan? How?
  - a. you personally
  - b. friends or family
  - c. employees
  - d. clientele
  - e. broader community
  
4. What procedure did you go through in order to access the loan?
  - a. How did you initially find out about the funding opportunity?
  - b. Did you compare funding opportunities?
  - c. Why did you choose Affinity?
  
5. If you had not received the loan, where would you have gone for funding?
  
6. How likely is it that you would have been able to proceed with the project without receipt of these funds?
  
7. Has your organization received funding from Affinity previously?
  - a. Was it a loan?
  
8. Is your organization a member of Affinity Credit Union?
  
9. Do you have any feedback on eligibility requirements, application procedure or delivery of the loan?
  
10. Have you experienced any differences in your interactions with Affinity as a result of its expansion?
  
11. Do you have any further comments to add regarding Affinity's small business microloans?