EDUCATION FOR COOPERATION:
THE EVOLUTION OF THE COADY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE’S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES
The Coady Institute

- Promotion of formal cooperatives and credit unions
- Accompanied by adult education
- Role: Education for Leadership and Action for development professionals from all over the world, especially the Global South
Context of pre war movement

- 1920s: Great depression accentuates widespread poverty and rural outmigration in Northeastern NS
- “Crisis of capitalism” “spectre of communism”
- Emerging international movement of cooperative organizing - Rochdale
- Emerging programs in adult education – workers’ education, folk schools
Post war..... Decline of coops

With some exceptions, in Nova Scotia:

"The movement was no longer mobilizing people made captive to economic depression and lack of opportunities"

MacInnes, 1982, cited in Kearney et al. (2001)

April 2012
The Coady Institute: 1959-70

Interest in the coop movement from the Global South

Context:
Asia and Africa: Post-independence, centralized states feeling tug of Cold War
Latin America: Land reform, indigenous rights, liberation theology

9 month diploma program: cooperatives, credit unions, community development
Coady Institute: 1970s

- Demise of cooperatives in the Global South, rise of NGO sector, and international development profession.
- Aid and FDI flows high (petrodollars).
- Training in "nuts and bolts" of development practice for meeting basic needs.
- Graduates were "functionaries not visionaries" of a basic needs approach (MacInnes).
- Legacy of the Antigonish movement and its principles.
1980s – 90s

Context:
Debt crisis, structural adjustment, roll back of the state (and state sponsored coops), rise of neoliberalism

Educational programs
- Savings and credit organizations; micro-finance
- Greater emphasis on collective action, advocacy and rights-based approaches
Current focus

- Collective action broadly: Organizing to claim economic as well as political space
- Innovative types of member-based organizations: new expressions of mutualism, new hybrids.
- Linking local to global, i.e. common trends in current "crisis of capitalism": resurgence of interest in social and solidarity economies
- Young leaders in Canada and around the world

Examples:

http://www.coady.stfx.ca/

April 2012
Innovation in cooperation
What we are seeing globally

Innovative hybrids:
- MBO + private sector: Producer companies, India
- MBO + state: Forest user groups, Nepal
- MBO (mutual interest) + NGO (public orientation): Community Foundations, South Africa, Community Based Institutions, Ethiopia
- Informal-formal: SHG-Bank linkages

New forms of common property resource management

Transnational linkages:
- Cross border trading associations
- Integration into fair trade regimes
- Transnational social movements
Education for Active Citizenship: Collective action

- Organizing to produce community
- Co-producing services
- Organizing to gain access to the mainstream economy
- Identifying ways to “take back the economy,”
- Mobilizing to create and occupy economic and political space
Echoes of economic crisis: Contemporary issues

1930s.....

2000s
Solidarity Economy:
“The way we consume defines the kind of society we want”
What they are saying....

“We are living at a time of profound transformation. The information and communication revolution, widespread concerns about private sector greed, public sector finances and impending climate chaos present a wide range of possibilities for cooperative expansion....

But the sector is not yet ready to take up these opportunities. It needs to be more innovative, more integrated, more internationalist, to get better infrastructure and to find 'the idea' that can mobilise support for co-operation."

Robin Murray: Cooperatives in the Age of Google
Coady Institute, June  2011
Citizen-Led Sustainable Change:
Innovations in North American Community Development
June 23 - 25, 2013
Antigonish, NS | Canada

www.citizenledchange.ca
References


April 2012