



Co-operating to Build a Better Nova Scotia

Coopérons pour une Nouvelle-Écosse meilleure

1

# Social Impact of Co-operatives in Nova Scotia

- Dr. Leslie Brown , Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Mount Saint Vincent University
- Mr. Kevin Petty , MBA Program, St. Mary's University



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada 

# Today's Presentation

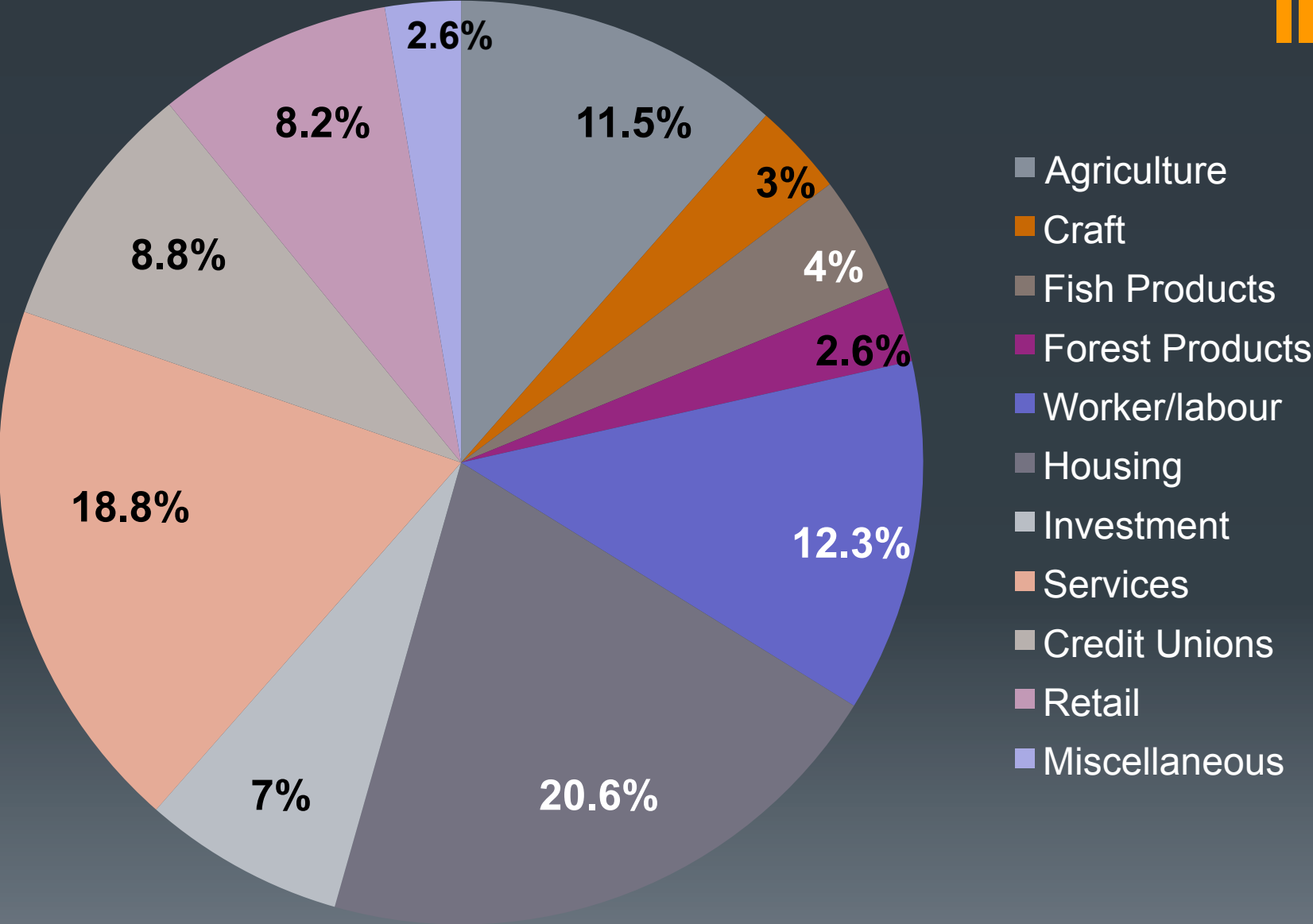
1. Purpose of the Research.
2. Overview of the province's co-operative sector.
3. What is social impact and how can it be measured.
4. Data that is available through the provincial reporting requirements.
5. **The Poster Project “Self-perceived relationships with community”.**
6. Summary.

# Purpose of this Research

3

- Consider alternative ways to conceptualize and measure the social impact of co-operatives (including credit unions) in N.S.
- Identify and summarize existing data; identify gaps
- Pilot an approach to learning from co-operatives in N. S. – inviting co-ops to prepare posters reflecting on their relationships with and impacts on their communities.
- Share the results at this conference in the hope that it will help inspire dialogue, mutual learning, further reflection, innovation, and action.

# The Co-operative Sector: Types of Co-operatives



# What is social impact?

- Refers to impact on the social outcomes considered to be important to well-being:  
Vitality + Viability
- Claimed by the “co-operative difference” , especially direct and indirect effects of:
  - mission, accountability and control (governance and collective ownership);
  - principles for deployment of surplus;
  - relationships with community.

# Nova Scotia Co-ops 2011: Governance

CO-OPS	COUNT	AV # Board Meetings	AV # Member meetings	AV # Educational Events
Marketing	115	6.5	3.4	9.7
Consumer	195	8	3.1	6.7
For-Profit	152	6.8	3	6.4
Non-profit	158	8.1	3.3	9.1
TOTAL	310 co-ops* *Info not available for CUs	7.5 average # board meetings	3.2 average # membership meetings	7.8 average # educational events

Boards range in size from 3 – 17; mean = 5.4	% of female board members ranges from 0 – 100%; 47.9% of all board members are women
--	--

# Membership and Employment (1)

7

<u>Description</u>	<u># of Co-ops/ CUs</u>	<u>Full Time</u>	<u>Part Time</u>	<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Membership</u>
<b>Housing</b>	70	1	14	15	1,918
<b>Investment</b>	24	0	8	8	2,190
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	9	0	4	4	74
<b>Retail</b>	28	161	203	364	25,430
<b>Services</b>	64	145	134	279	5,257
<b>Credit Unions</b>	30	654	161	815	158,041
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>961</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>1,485</b>	<b>192,910</b>

## Membership and Employment (2)

8

<u>Description</u>	<u># of Co-ops/CUs</u>	<u>Full Time</u>	<u>Part Time</u>	<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Membership</u>
<b>Agriculture</b>	39	1,338	614	1,952	3,188
<b>Craft Products</b>	11	27	7	34	154
<b>Fish Products</b>	14	130	45	175	403
<b>Forest Products</b>	9	32	22	54	882
<b>Worker Labour</b>	42	120	186	306	2,522
<b>SUBTOTALS</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>1647</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>2,521</b>	<b>7,149</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>2,608</b>	<b>1,398</b>	<b>4,006</b>	<b>200,059</b>

## Direct and Indirect Effects

9

Meet needs.  
develop skills  
and networks  
INDIVIDUAL

+

Social  
Inclusion &  
Cohesion  
COMMUNITY

+

Social Capital:  
Bridging and  
Bonding  
COMMUNITY

+

Vitality &  
Viability  
COMMUNITY

+



# The Poster Project:

Self-perceived relationships  
with community

# Methodology

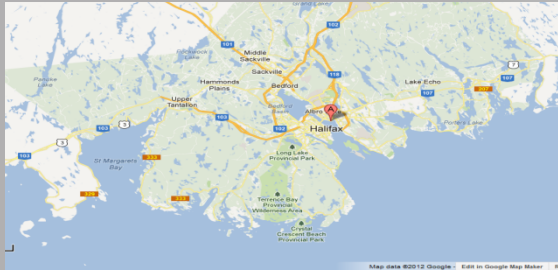
- Mailed invitations to all co-operatives incorporated in NS
- Emailed federations to relay to their members
- Attached poster template with questions about social impact
- Followed up by email to get answers that were not filled out on the poster

# Your Co-op/CU name here

\*Please, play with different themes in the Design tab above  
 -Change the colours and/or pattern, add pictures, graphs and whatever else  
 -make it your own, it will be your poster  
 -have fun with it

Type of co-op: Agriculture, Arts/Culture, Child Care, Craft Products, Financial, Insurance, Fish Products, Forest products, Housing, Investment, Miscellaneous, Retail, Service or Worker?  
 For Profit or non-profit?  
 Founded in what year?  
 Located where? (# of branches?)

# of members, # of committees (including board), # of committees that include members who are not on the board  
 # of employees (part time; full time)  
 Volume of business, gross revenue (if not confidential)  
 Ownership (consumers, workers, producers, multi-stakeholder)



### Our Community

-How does your co-op define its community? (e.g. geographic, social, cultural, ..)  
 -Who do you consider to be the key stakeholders? Are all of them part of the community?  
 -What impact does your co-op want to have on its community/ies?  
 -Does your co-op ever assess impact and/or success of its social mission or does it aspire to do so?  
 - Other comments about your community?

Your Mission statement could go here, or any other formal public statements of social/cultural/environmental commitments.

### Community Impact

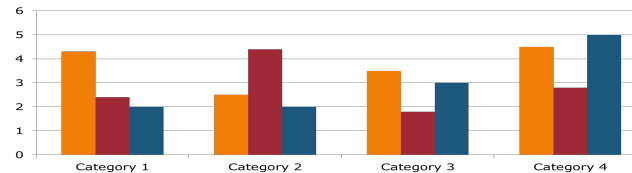
Highlight examples of social impact that you are proud of E.g. volunteering, serving on community organizations, promoting education through youth camps, scholarships, student placements, co-operating with other co-ops, hiring or buying local, providing opportunities for continuing education for members etc.

### Community Impact

Give and example of a relationship or relationships in the community that are key to the success of the co-op and the implementation of its mission. What would be different about our community(ies) if this co-operative did not exist? E.g. networks, skills, cohesion, other?



Example) "This co-op allowed me to earn my business diploma as I worked part-time."



-A diagram or graph could be a good way to demonstrate commitment to community over the years

-Or Feel free to add picture, quotes, charts, pie charts or whatever you like. The poster is yours to keep after the conference in November.

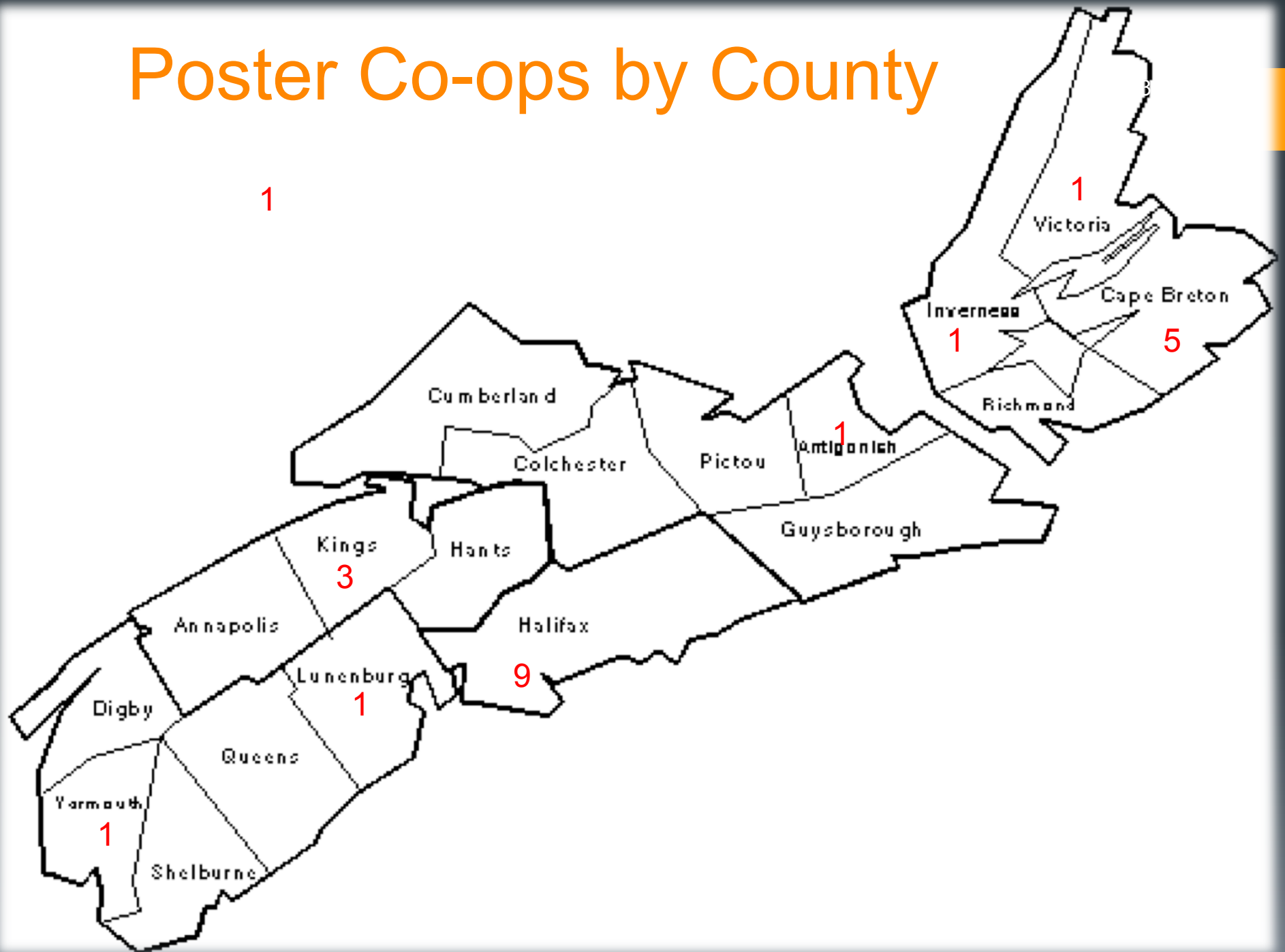


Co-operating to Build a Better Nova Scotia

Coopérons pour une Nouvelle-Écosse meilleure



# Poster Co-ops by County



# Posters Submitted

14

<u>Description</u>	<u># of Co-ops</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Membership</u>
Miscellaneous	1 (Hfx Media)	0	60
Retail	4	970 (mostly Co-op Atlantic)	2,496 (mostly King's Book Store)
Services	3	8	1,453 (mostly Arimathea Funeral Co-op)
Agriculture	2	601 (Mostly Scotian Gold)	66
Craft Products	1	0	34
Fish Products	1	n/a	130
Worker Labour	2	74	24
Financial Services	8	358	71,618
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b><u>22 Posters</u></b>	<b><u>2,011</u></b>	<b><u>75,881</u></b>

# Mission Statements (N=22)<sup>15</sup>

Community

Appears in 11

Social

Appears in 4

People

Appears in 4

# Definitions of Community

*“Our community includes farmers , suppliers, members, customers and groups that share our values”*

- The Grainery Food Co-op

*“...Although we are centered in Nova Scotia, we reach out to all of Atlantic Canada and to co-ops across the country”*

- Just Us!

*“...We also define our target community socio-economically; that is, we aim to specifically serve a lower-income community that currently does not have access to a local grocery store.”*

- Community Carrot Grocery Co-op

# Key Relationships in fulfilling mission 17



# Desired Impact

- “We want to educate the community at large about the benefits of co-op membership, and the benefits co-ops bring to communities. We want to ensure that we are providing members of our community sound financial education, and are a community leader in such initiatives as community giving, reducing our environmental impact etc.”

- Bergengren Credit Union

# Examples of Social Impact

19

- “We provide a space for local food to flourish, for local business to grow, and for the community to shop, educate themselves on relevant issues and to inspire each other.
- **Educational** youth garden, Micro loan finance program, CBU student society pocket market, Monthly chef’s corner
- Reach out and teach lessons, Community involvement and volunteering, supporting the creation of a local food network”

- Cape Breton Farmers Market



# What would be different about your community if your co-op was not there?

20

1. Financial/Economic Ramifications

3. Accessibility Issues to Healthy Food or Community Space etc.

2. Reduced Quality of Service (including ethical aspect)

4. Lost Research and Education Opportunities

5. Loss of Voice for Marginalized Groups or Regions

6. Lower Autonomy over Financial Services

7. Loss of Choice to use a member-owned financial institution

# Summary

21

- This offers a beginning point for dialogue and action within the sector and beyond
- Many different types of needs are met by co-operatives across N.S., and many are benefitting from participation in the sector
- Federations are fundamental structures through which co-operatives communicate and develop
- In looking at self-perceived social impact we found an emphasis on education, volunteerism, philanthropy, strong relationships with communities, & much more.
- There is need for more comprehensive provincial data collection, and for further research

Many thanks to all the co-operatives/credit unions and federations that contributed to this research, and especially to Lynda Russell and to Atlantic Central for providing sector information and statistics.

See the poster displays on the mezzanine, and the map prepared by Community Counts!

Questions?

# Participating Co-ops/Credit Unions

- Arimathea Funeral Co-op
- Bergengren CU - [www.bergengrencu.com](http://www.bergengrencu.com)
- Cape Breton Farmers Market - [cbfarmersmarket.com](http://cbfarmersmarket.com)
- Careforce - [www.careforce.ca](http://www.careforce.ca)
- Coastal Financial CU - [www.coastalfinancial.ca](http://www.coastalfinancial.ca)
- Community Carrot Grocery Co-op
- Co-op Atlantic - [www.coopatantic.ca](http://www.coopatantic.ca)
- Dominion CU - [www.dominioncreditunion.ca](http://www.dominioncreditunion.ca)
- East Coast CU - [www.eastcoastcu.ca](http://www.eastcoastcu.ca)
- Glace Bay Central CU - [www.glacebaycentralcreditunion.com](http://www.glacebaycentralcreditunion.com)
- Gulf Aquarium and Marine Station - [www.cmag-gams.org](http://www.cmag-gams.org)
- Halifax Media Co-op - <http://halifax.mediacoop.ca>
- Heritage Cape Breton Connection - <http://heritagecapebreton.ca/>
- Just Us! - [www.justuscoffee.com](http://www.justuscoffee.com)
- King's Book Store - [www.kingsbookstore.ca](http://www.kingsbookstore.ca)
- LaHave Credit Union - [lahaverivercreditunion.ca](http://lahaverivercreditunion.ca)
- New Waterford CU - [www.newwaterfordcreditunion.com](http://www.newwaterfordcreditunion.com)
- Scotian Gold - [www.scotiangold.com](http://www.scotiangold.com)
- Serving Seniors Alliance - [www.serving seniors.info](http://www.serving seniors.info)
- Teachers Plus CU - [www.teacherspcu.ca](http://www.teacherspcu.ca)
- The Grainery Food Co-op - <http://thegrainery.ca>
- Viewpoint Gallery Co-op - [www.viewpointgallery.ca](http://www.viewpointgallery.ca)



# APPENDICES

# ICA Principles

25

- 1. Voluntary and Open Membership
  - 2. Democratic member Control
  - 3. Member Economic Participation
  - 4. Autonomy and Independence
  - 5. Education, Training and Information
  - 6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
  - 7. Concern for Community
- 
- **1. Adhésion volontaire et ouverte**
  - **2. Contrôle démocratique des membres**
  - **3. Participation économique des membres**
  - **4. Autonomie et indépendance**
  - **5. Éducation, formation et information**
  - **6. Coopération entre les coopératives**
  - **7. Engagement envers la communauté**

## Questions asked of Co-ops that prepared posters (1)

### Demographics / Who are we?

- Name of co-operative; Location(s); Year founded
- Type of co-operative (using the categories developed by Prov. of N.S.)
- Categories of member-owners (e.g. other co-operatives, consumers, producers, worker-owned, multi-stakeholder)
- Non-profit or for-profit; # employees (p-t, f-t)
- Mission statement if any + any other formal public statements of social / cultural / environmental commitments
- # members; #committees (including Board); # committees that include non-board members
- [if not confidential] Volume of business? Gross revenues?

## Questions asked of Co-ops that prepared posters (2)

### Our community?

- How does our co-operative define its community(ies)? (e.g. geographic, social, cultural, ...)?
- Who do we consider to be the co-operative's key stakeholders? Are these stakeholders all part of our community/ies?
- What impacts does the co-operative want to have on its community/ies?
- Does your co-op ever assess impact and/or success of social mission or does it aspire to do so?
- Other comments about your community

## Questions asked of Co-ops that prepared posters (3)

### Community Impact

- What would be different about our community(ies) if this co-operative did not exist? (e.g. networks, skills, cohesion, other?)
- Highlight examples of social impacts that you are proud of (e.g. volunteering, serving on community organizations, promoting education through youth camps, scholarships, student placements, co-operating with other co-ops, opportunities for continuing education for members, etc.)
- Give an example of a relationship(s) in the community(ies) that are key to the success of the co-operative and the implementation of its mission?

# What is social impact?

- No standardized list of indicators
- Some common approaches look at impacts on:
  - Distribution of income and wealth (including access to quality employment) (Lafleur & Merrien, 2012)
  - Social inclusion (ILO report, 2012)
  - Health (Erdal, 2012)
  - Social capital (e.g. social cohesion, density of networks, propensity for co-operation and collective action) Brown, forthcoming)
  - Human capital (e.g. skills in democratic governance, dialogue, and leadership) (Nembhard, 2004)
  - Environmental sustainability (Gertler, 2001)
  - Democratization of the economy (Restakis, 2010)
  - Community development (MacLeod, 1997 and 2012)