

Webinar:
**New Thinking on Co-operative
Governance: Highlights from the
International Co-operative
Governance Symposium**

**Sept 5-7, 2013
Saint Mary's University**

Symposium Co-Directors:



Karen Miner
karen.miner@smu.ca



Sonja Novkovic
snovkovic@smu.ca

www.ManagementStudies.coop

Agenda



- About the Host
- Why a Symposium on Governance?
- About the Symposium
- ICA Blueprint
- Themes and key issues
- Where do we go from here?
- Questions



Hosted by:

Co-operative Management Education

Master of Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions (since 2003)

Graduate Diploma in Co-operative Management (2013)

International Consortium of Leaders in Co-operative Management Education

Symposia (4 so far)

Imagine 2012

Research



CO-OPERATIVE
MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION



Why a Symposium?



Hosting symposia is an important initiative for us.

- Helping the sector explore potential solutions to tough, unanswered questions
- Providing input into our research; training; education agenda; PD for alumni, student, and instructors
- Broadening everyone's perspective while learning from other experts across the co-operative movement.



Why Governance?



- A critical element of the co-op difference
- Limited research on co-op governance
- Diversity of approach to governance in the sector
- Unanswered questions about best co-op approaches
- Lack of training on co-op approaches



About the Governance Symposium



The Symposium was a gathering of governance practitioners and researchers who discussed and debated the challenges and opportunities for co-operative governance at a global scale.

The Governance Symposium aligned with the ICA Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade. Summary Report being delivered to ICA

Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, stated that *"Good Governance is vital to the trust and confidence in which business is held in today's world. Moreover it is the life blood of our people-owned and controlled model of business - so congratulations to Saint Mary's for this governance symposium which will highlight a key ingredient in helping us build this co-operative decade."*

About the Symposium



The Symposium attracted roughly 100 participants including:

- Academic researchers and instructors
- Chief governance officers and corporate secretaries, Board Chairs and Directors, CEOs
- Co-operative sector organizations/associations
- Governance consultants

Countries represented included: Canada, US, UK, Italy, France, Finland, Croatia, Poland, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago.

ICA Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade



One of 5 interrelated themes:

- Elevate **participation** within membership and governance to a new level

The Blueprint use “participation” as a short-hand for the unique co-operative approach through which individuals own their co-operative, and participate in its democratic governance.



Emerging themes in co-operative governance



Governance directly related to co-op success / failure

Co-op governance is about member control

- Communication
- Engagement
- Empowerment
- Decision-making

New forms of governance?



Use new forms of participation (virtual, symbolic)

‘Deep vs shallow’ participation

Identifying with the co-op (symbols; co-op culture)



Approaches at the Symposium



Panels, presentations, discussions, question periods:

- conceptual: research and practitioner
- practical examples (cases)
- how to: board assessment, skill sets



Disconnects



- Skills and assessment apply to any Board of directors (agency issues- board vs management)
- Concepts and practice of co-op governance talk about
 - Diffusion of power; member control
 - Member engagement through participation in governance and decision-making (e.g. Elected district delegates sit on Board committees)
 - Complexity and network governance
 - Convergence of interests, rather than conflict of interest

Concepts and practice



- Diffusion of power
 - Avoid oligarchy
- Member engagement
 - Take ownership of the co-op
- Complexity and network governance
 - Subsidiarity principle – decisions at lowest levels
- Convergence of interests-shared vision
 - Revisit the role of managers; management style
 - Manager -the extended hand of the Board – align interests; remove conflict; accountable to members

Emerging issues in co-op governance



- Growth and governance – keep the mission alive
- Complexity (adaptation; resilience; innovation)
- Transparency
- Networks – a must for survival
- Vision and strategy – the power of WHY
- Risk aversion and the role of 2nd tier co-ops
- Education and training



Additional issues



Importance of staff (labour) engagement as members

Governance to ensure the subordinate role of capital

Network to reduce risk – form capital funds; share governance expertise; pool of co-op directors; cross-directorships;

Examine the role of government – co-op supportive role (esp. social coops and/or developmental states – collaboration on values, rather than control)

Where we go from here?



Saint Mary's commitments:

- Summary Report to inform: ICA, 2014 Summit, research agenda
- Existing research, case studies, approach to feed into our education programs

Personal commitments:

- All participants took away ideas that they will implement

Other ideas?



Questions?

Go to the website to find:

- Final program
- Access the Summary Report (available Oct 15)
- Download presentations made on September 7th
- List of registrants

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Co-operative Management Education:



Karen Miner
Managing Director
karen.miner@smu.ca



Sonja Novkovic
Associate Academic Director
snovkovic@smu.ca



SAINT MARY'S
UNIVERSITY SINCE 1802

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