



COMPARISON BETWEEN CO-OPERATIVES IN ONTARIO AND ATLANTIC CANADA

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A comparison of cooperatives in Ontario and Atlantic Canada (New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) yielded some visible results. Major differences are outlined below and the entire comparison can be found on Table 1.

Response Rates: Ontario has more cooperatives than Atlantic Canada (1303 vs. 686). More housing cooperatives responded in the Ontario 2007 census than in the Atlantic Canada survey (48 vs. 29%). Fewer of Ontario's financial coops did the same (19% vs. 56%).

Type, Province, Language: Housing makes up the largest proportion of cooperatives in Ontario – larger than any single sector in Ontario or Atlantic Canada (45% vs. 13% in Atlantic Canada for housing).

Basic Profile: Compared to Atlantic Canada, Ontario cooperatives have been in business longer (nearly 4 times as long). Our oldest cooperatives are financial (100 years) and "other" cooperatives (112 years). Our financial cooperatives are nearly 2 times older than the ones in Atlantic Canada.

Membership in Federations or Associations: A relatively smaller percentage of Ontario's cooperatives are part of a federation or association compared to Atlantic Canada (77% vs. 100%).

Co-op Membership: Our median and average number of members per coop is smaller than the number for Atlantic Canada. Our coops however can be up to 6 times larger than the largest Atlantic Canada coop - 209,000 compared to 30,000. Twenty percent (20%) of Ontario coops have 35 members or less compared to the same percentage in Atlantic Canada (16 members/co-op).

Meetings and Delegates: The preliminary comparison indicates that the proportion of members who attend meetings is 160 times smaller than in the Atlantic Provinces.

Volunteers: Ontario cooperatives use more volunteers overall (64 vs. 55%). Our use of volunteers in housing coops is much higher than in Atlantic Canada (93 vs. 82%).

Revenues and Expenditures: Ontario median housing coop revenues were 2.8 times larger than Atlantic Canada housing coops. Our financial coops however earned half the value of Atlantic Canada's financial coop revenues. In terms of expenditures, Ontario cooperatives had higher median expenditures than Atlantic coops (1.23 times or 23% higher). Ontario housing coop expenditures were 2.8 times (180%) greater than

expenditures of housing cooperatives in Atlantic Canada. Ontario financial coops however had much lower expenditures than Atlantic financial coops (46% of their value).

Employees: Ontario cooperatives have a greater proportion of full time staff and smaller proportion of part time staff compared to Atlantic Canada. The maximum and average number of employees in Ontario coops was 2 times greater than Atlantic Canada coops. Compared to Atlantic coops, 75% of Ontario coops have 10 employees or less (compared to 66% for Atlantic Canada).

Community Contributions: Atlantic coops make more monetary donations than Ontario coops (59 vs. 32% - a difference of nearly 2 times). Atlantic coops also give more (\$3000 vs. 900 median) per coop. In total however, 417 Ontario coops donated over \$8.99 million to the community, which is far greater than what Atlantic coops donated. Of course there are fewer Atlantic coops that donated relative to Ontario coop donors (145 vs. 417).

Collaboration with Other Co-ops: Ontario cooperatives have a tendency for small amounts of collaboration with other cooperatives or organizations (35%) more than any other level of cooperation. Housing coops have a tendency for small or moderate levels of collaboration. Moderate collaboration is much higher for Atlantic coops (9% more). Financial coops in Ontario have a tendency for small levels of collaboration as well. Atlantic counterparts however do "a lot" (+12%) and moderate collaboration (+14%) more often. Child care cooperatives have a tendency towards small levels of collaboration while "other" coops have a tendency towards no collaboration (Ontario or Atlantic Canada).

Multiple Bottom Line Reporting: Atlantic coops are more likely to report social (+11%) and environmental (+8%) impacts than Ontario cooperatives.

We can conclude that there are apparent differences between Ontario and Atlantic cooperatives. This is particularly true in the areas of revenues, expenditures, community contributions, collaboration and multiple bottom line reporting.

Table 1. A comparison of the differences in 14 broad areas between Ontario and Atlantic Canada cooperatives.ⁱ

	Ontario ⁱⁱ	Atlantic (NB, NF, NS, PEI) ⁱⁱⁱ
Structure of the Questionnaire	40 sections, 80 questions	8 sections, 45 questions
Response Rates	54% initial response rate 44% when partial	43.1% (296 out of 686)

	<p>responses discarded (576 out of 1303)</p> <p>Housing: 48% Financial: 18.8% Child Care: 12% Other: 20%</p> <p>Central ON: 49% SW ON: 26% East ON: 13% North ON: 12%</p>	<p>Housing: 29.2% Financial: 56.0% Co-ops: 44.3%</p> <p>New Brunswick: 54.2% Newfoundland: 31.1% Nova Scotia: 40.4% PEI: 39.8%</p> <p>English: 41.6% French: 50.9%</p>
Type, Province, Language	<p>Housing: 45% Financial: 17% Child Care: 17% Agriculture: 6% Other: 12%</p> <p>Central ON: 48% SW ON: 25% Eastern ON: 16% Northern ON: 11%</p>	<p>Housing: 13.5% Financial: 20.6% Co-ops: 65.9%</p> <p>New Brunswick: 35.1% Newfoundland: 7.8% Nova Scotia: 44.6% PEI: 12.5%</p> <p>English: 80.1% French: 19.9%</p>
Basic Profile	<p>Years in Business All: 114 years Housing: 67 years Financial: 100 years Childcare: 47 years Other: 112 years</p>	<p>Years in Business: ALL: 33 Years Financial: 58 years</p>
Membership in Federations/Associations	<p>Number of Memberships: 957 % of All Memberships: 77%</p>	<p>Number of Memberships: 428 % of All Memberships: 100%</p>
Co-op Members	<p>Median Number/Co-op: 86 Average Number Per Co-op: 1044 Maximum Number in a Co-op: 209,000 20% of coops have 35</p>	<p>Median Number/Co-op: 100 Average Number Per Co-op: 1888 Maximum Number in a Co-op: 30,000</p>

	members or less		20% of coops have 16 members or less	
Meetings	2196 delegates attended meetings 0.16% of the membership (2196 out of 1.4 million)		In 50% of AGM: 25% of the membership or less attended.	
Board of Directors	Typical Board: 6-8 22% offer some financial compensation		Typical Board: 7 or 9 24% of Boards offer some financial compensation	
Use of Non-Board Volunteers	64% use some volunteers 93% housing 40% financial (lowest) 97% child care (highest) 43% other		55% use some volunteers. 82% housing (highest) 39% financial (lowest)	
Revenues (Median)	All ^{iv} Housing ^v Financial ^{vi} Child Care ^{vii} Other ^{viii} Central ON ^{ix} SW ON ^x East ON ^{xi} North ON ^{xii}	\$450,000 \$540,000 \$1.2 million \$44,000 \$120,000 \$470,000 \$400,000 \$250,000 \$510,000	All ^{xiii} Housing ^{xiv} CU/CP ^{xv} Coops ^{xvi} English ^{xvii} French ^{xviii} NB ^{xix} NF ^{xx} NS ^{xxi} PEI ^{xxii}	\$440,000 \$190,000 \$2.6 million \$250,000 \$310,000 \$2.9 million \$720,000 \$1.6 million \$280,000 \$180,000
Expenditures (Median)	All ^{xxiii} Housing ^{xxiv} Financial ^{xxv} Child Care ^{xxvi} Other ^{xxvii} Central ON ^{xxviii}	\$420,000 \$530,000 \$1.1 million \$45,000 \$89,000 \$440,000 \$358,000	All ^{xxxii} Housing ^{xxxiii} CU/CP ^{xxxiv} Coops ^{xxxv} English ^{xxxvi} French ^{xxxvii} NB ^{xxxviii} NF ^{xxxix} NS ^{xl}	\$340,000 \$190,000 \$2.4 million \$170,000 \$260,000 \$2.1 million \$570,000 \$1.3 million \$210,000

	SW ON ^{xxix} East ON ^{xxx} North ON ^{xxxi}	\$278,000 \$500,000	PEI ^{xli}	\$110,000
Paid Employees	76% full time 24% part time Median Number: 3 Maximum Number: 1560 Average Number: 13 75% of coops have 10 employees or less		40% full time 60% part time Median Number: 3 Maximum Number: 750 Average Number: 23.5 2/3 (66%) of coops have 10 employees or less	
Contribution to the Community	Monetary Donations 32% Median Amount Given \$900 417 co-ops donated over \$8.99 million Donations of Goods/Materials Received: 11% of coops Median Dollar Value 2007: \$2000 Other Support: 34% of coops		Monetary Donations 59% Median Amount Given \$3000 145 co-ops donated over \$2.77 million Donations of Goods/Materials: 36% of coops Median Dollar Value 2006: \$1750 Other Support: 41% of coops	
Collaboration with Other Co-operatives	Total A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know Housing A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know Financial	8% 17% 35% 27% 1.9% 6% 19% 33% 23% 2%	Total A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know Housing A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know Financial	22% 24% 27% 26% 0% 2.9% 38% 32% 26% 0%

	A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know	14% 22% 37% 18% 2.6%	A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know	46% 36% 16% 1.6% 0%
	Child Care A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know	 2.3% 12% 49% 30% 2.9%		
	Other A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know	 9% 13% 24% 39% 0%	Other A Lot Moderate Small No Don't Know	 17% 18% 30% 35% 0%
Multiple Bottom Line Reporting	Social Impacts 27%		Social Impacts 39%	
	Environmental Impacts 9.9%		Environmental Impacts 18%	

* CU = credit unions

* CP = Caisses Populaires

* NB = New Brunswick

* NF = Newfoundland & Labrador

* NS = Nova Scotia

* PEI = Prince Edward Island

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Theriault L, Skibbens R and L Brown. 2008. A New Portrait of Co-operatives and Credit Unions in Atlantic Canada. Presentation. CASC Meeting. Vancouver, BC.

i Results were compiled using a combination of sources and programs (JMP, SPSS).

ii Information is based on: Lam 2008, On Coop 2008 and Lasby 2008.

iii Information is based on: Theriault et al. 2008.

iv N = 576

v n = 279

vi n = 108

vii n = 71

viii n = 118

ix n = 280

x n = 148

xi n = 77

xii n = 71

xiii n = 228

xiv n = 22

xv n = 54

xvi n = 152

xvii n = 184

xviii n = 44

xix n = 85

xx n = 18

xxi n = 96

xxii n = 29

xxiii N = 576

xxiv n = 279

xxv n = 108

xxvi n = 71

xxvii n = 118

xxviii n = 280

xxix n = 148

xxx n = 77

xxxi n = 71

xxxii n = 220

xxxiii n = 22

xxxiv n = 55

xxxv n = 143

xxxvi n = 179

xxxvii n = 41

xxxviii n = 79

xxxix n = 18

xl n = 96

xli n = 27