



## **Co-operating to Build a Better Nova Scotia**

## **Coopérons pour une Nouvelle-Écosse meilleure**

# **Action framework and specific commitments for the Nova Scotia co-operative sector into the coming decade**

## **Summary Report**

### **Prepared for**

Conference Steering Committee

Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, Mount Saint Vincent University, Saint Mary's University, Le Conseil Coopératif Acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Nova Scotia Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, Credit Unions of Atlantic Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Canadian Co-operative Association.

### **Prepared by**

Amanda Hachey

December 10, 2012

During the Co-operating to Build a Better Nova Scotia Conference November 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> 2012, youth, co-op developers, researchers, government officials, co-op members, social entrepreneurs and co-operators from the co-operative ecosystem in Nova Scotia gathered at Mount Saint Vincent University. For a day and a half they attended meetings, plenary sessions, coffee breaks, radio shows, exhibits, and panel discussions covering three core themes:

- **Living the Co-operative Principles** – Preserving and strengthening the co-operative difference
- **Nova Scotia Co-operatives and the Global Context** - International Year of Co-operatives and beyond
- **Policy** - Co-operation to foster a healthy and diverse co-operative eco-system contributing to well-being, innovation and development

The final morning of the conference was dedicated to a group visioning session with all conference participants to create an action framework and specific commitments for the Nova Scotia co-operative sector into the coming decade.

With about 45 people in attendance the morning was kicked off by Norman Greenberg summarizing the conference highlights.

Participants were then given individual time to reflect on what they had experienced at the conference and what ideas or projects they felt would continue to build a co-operative eco-system in Nova Scotia and they would like to see become a reality.



The floor was then opened up for participants to announce those projects or ideas, responding to the question:

***How can WE continue to build a co-operative eco-system in Nova Scotia?***

The following eight projects and action items were identified and worked on over two and a half hours. Participants worked in groups and answered a series of questions to bring the idea or project to the next stage. The remainder of this document includes each action item with a time line, next steps, and individuals interested in being involved. This list reflects the interests and commitments of those in the room, and can guide both action and further reflections on priorities for the coming year. A process moving forward will be developed in consultation with the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, Le Conseil Coopératif Acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse, the people who called each project, and other interested parties.

1. Educating the business community about the co-op model, its applications, economic and social impacts
2. Education and Youth Involvement
3. Co-op Video Series
4. Create a Task Force for Co-operative Development Framework
5. Attracting and Retaining Talent and Creating opportunities for educated people
6. Co-op Events
7. Transportation Co-op
8. Industrial Worker Co-ops

Who called each project? (see details below)

1. Mark Sparrow
2. Joe Candelora and Chris McDaniel
3. Trevor Snow
4. Nova Scotia Co-operative Council
5. Erin Hancock
6. Dan Anderson
7. Jyelle Vogel
8. Justin Ellerby

## **1. Educating the business community about the co-op model, its applications, economic and social impacts**

What is the name of your project or idea? **Educating the business community about the co-op model, its applications, economic and social impacts**

What is the purpose behind your project or idea? **To inform and educate business service providers, development organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), service clubs, lawyers, accountants, and lenders on the co-op model, its applications, impacts, strengths, and flexibility.**

What are we learning about the project or idea? **There are many ways we can achieve this.**

Who do we need help from? Potential partners? **Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, Credit Unions, Halifax Media Co-op and knowledgeable business people to help develop attractive wording.**

What resources are likely to be required? **PowerPoint presentations, handouts, personal meetings with leaders, luncheons, videos and reputable voices to explain the benefit to them (e.g. increased clients).**

What are the next steps we will take? **Compile a team, further brainstorming, funding, partnerships and designing an action plan.**

When would we like to see this project or idea become a reality? **June 2013.**

Who called the project? **Mark Sparrow.**

## 2. Education and Youth Involvement

What is the name of your project or idea? **Education and Youth Involvement**

What is the purpose behind your project or idea? **The purpose is to educate youth about co-operatives to sustain the co-operative movement. We would like to keep youth engaged and informed and keep co-ops visible. We would also like to make youth aware of job opportunities in the sector.**

What are we learning about the project or idea? **Education on co-ops is lacking at the present time. People don't realize that they can help themselves.**

Who do we need help from? **Potential partners? Students' unions, teachers, youth organizations, school administrations, Nova Scotia Secondary School Students' Association, Conseil Jeunesse Provincial de la Nouvelle-Écosse academics, other youth, teachers' unions (PD Days), co-ops and credit unions.**

What resources are likely to be required? **Videos, curriculum – supporting documents (e.g. All for Each, Tous pour Un), marketing expertise, courses (post-secondary), research.**

What are the next steps we will take? **We must connect with organizations, schools and teachers/professors. We must initiate the conversation to encourage more youth to get involved. We must host workshops, conferences, events to make the model known.**

By when would we like to see this project or idea become a reality? **Anytime (6 months to a year). It starts now, actions later.**

Who called the project? **Joe Candelora and Chris McDaniel.**

### 3. Co-op Video Series

What is the name of your project or idea? **Co-op promotional video series**

What is the purpose behind your project or idea? **To educate various target audiences and the general public on the value of co-ops and creating awareness of the co-op brand.**

What are we learning about the project or idea? **Brand plus news (academic, knowledge, media). Post news issue with a co-op solution (memoir) to go viral.**

Who do we need help from? Potential partners? **NS co-ops (film co-op, media co-op, etc.), volunteers, actors, writers, photographers.**

What resources are likely to be required? **Media content, talent, financial backing.**

What are the next steps we will take? **Step 1 – Information base ‘What is a co-op?’; step 2 – The key message from the video; step 3- will be incorporated to follow-up videos on specific news/issues/co-ops.**

By when would we like to see this project or idea become a reality? **Production time 3 months.**

Who called the project? **Trevor Snow.**

#### 4. Create a Task Force

What is the name of your project or idea? **Create a task force**

What is the purpose behind your project or idea? **To create a task force to work with government on the promotion of the co-op model. To identify the co-operative development framework.**

Who do we need help from? Potential partners? **Multi-stakeholder Taskforce.**

What resources are likely to be required? **Sponsorships, media support, active participation.**

What are the next steps we will take? **A meeting to start a co-op development framework.**

Who attended the session and would like to help move this project forward? **Nova Scotia Co-operative Council.**

## 5. Attracting and Retaining Talent and Creating Opportunities for Educated People

What is the name of your project or idea? **Attracting and retaining talent and creating opportunities for educated people**

What is the purpose behind your project or idea? **Creating opportunities for young people as well as attracting and retaining young people in the sector.**

Who do we need help from? Potential partners? **Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, universities and colleges and their career centres, Charity Village.**

What resources are likely to be required? **Collaboration between co-ops. Also, promotion and advertising.**

What are the next steps we will take? **Nova Scotia Co-operative Council to ramp up “Target 100 Employment Program”, get more co-ops involved, promote and attract young talent to co-op jobs.**

### Approaches:

- **Creating and supporting youth employment through worker co-op creation**
- **Target youth and retirees**
- **Highlight co-op positions as more than just a job**
- **Highlight training opportunities in co-op jobs**
- **Interchange between co-ops to keep talent moving and stimulating people in their jobs (build network between co-ops, share employees)**
- **Have co-ops tap into existing youth programs**
- **Internship and mentorship opportunities – encourage co-ops to offer more internships**
- **Have universities/colleges give credit for young people interning in co-ops or doing special projects in co-ops**
- **Create entry level 1 year opportunities for new graduate to work in co-ops**
- **Build up target 100 employment program and get more co-ops involved**
- **Raise the bar for healthy wages**
- **Have consultation with youth about how to make co-ops more attractive**

By when would we like to see this project or idea become a reality? **2013**

Who called the project? **Erin Hancock.**

## 6. Co-op Events

What is the name of your project or idea? **Events co-ordination and consolidation among co-ops**

What is the purpose behind your project or idea? **The purpose is to encourage co-operatives to openly work together in a supportive environment to share resources, ideas, and to use events as a promotion.**

What are we learning about the project or idea? **There is an existing model in the co-operative values to build on.**

Who do we need help from? Potential partners? **Municipality involvement and co-operatives.**

What resources are likely to be required? **Sponsorships, media support, active participation.**

What are the next steps we will take? **Make a list of co-operatives in the greater Moncton area, see who is interested in participating.**

By when would we like to see this project or idea become a reality?

Who called the project? **Dan Anderson.**

## 7. Transportation Co-op

What is the name of your project or idea? **Transportation Co-op**

What is the purpose behind your project or idea? **Engaging people around the idea of accessible, efficient, affordable and sustainable transportation.**

Who do we need help from? Potential partners? **It is so big and diverse - from the dream of a bullet train to active transportation.**

Who do we need help from? Potential partners? **Existing co-ops.**

What resources are likely to be required? **Money and resources will follow people and passion.**

What are the next steps we will take? **Communication between existing transportation co-ops, Car Share, bus co-ops, Bike Again, Ecology Action Centre (EAC), transportation issues committee.**

By when would we like to see this project or idea become a reality? **Forward motion.**

Who called the project? **Jyelle Vogel**

## 8. Industrial Worker Co-ops

What is the name of your project or idea? **Industrial worker co-ops**

What is the purpose behind your project or idea? **Reduce community's long term dependence on industry by using worker co-op structure as a vehicle to develop interpersonal skills, organizational skills, democratic efficacy. If industry leaves the human capital will remain. Facilitate worker re-deployment through 3rd-party certification in "workplace participation".**

Who do we need help from? Potential partners? **Unions have a poor brand name, problematic effects, and don't address community dependency. The Union rank and file are the constituents and the existing union management could be partners. Co-ops can also work with unions, and many worker co-ops are part of unions for a number of reasons.**

What resources are likely to be required? **Peer-to-peer organizing, business case development, broader community support.**

What are the next steps we will take? **Shoe leather, information gathering, identifying, political fissures to exploit, demonstrating through existing worker co-ops.**

By when would we like to see this project or idea become a reality? **Concurrent with Harbour project and shipyard.**

Who called the project? **Justin Ellerby**