

Looking back . . . and looking forward

At the end of February, the **MCD Research Network** submitted its "Milestone Report" to SSHRC, thus marking an important milestone for the network: the completion of the first year of our 5-year research programme.

We can reflect on our many accomplishments in the first year:

- ✓ Establishing a name and identity for our CURA ("**Measuring the Co-operative Difference Research Network**") that reflects the overall purpose of our research: to collect meaningful data that will demonstrate, to the public and policy-makers alike, that co-operatives make a **real difference** in our society – a difference that not only sets co-ops apart from other forms of businesses, but also works to make our world a better place.
- ✓ Creating a website that is updated weekly and has attracted over 3381 visits since it was launched in the summer of 2010.
- ✓ Building relationships and a sense of common purpose among the members of our research team. This has been a formidable task. Our research team includes:
 - co-op practitioners and policy makers from federations and associations from across the country;
 - academics and students from a wide range of disciplines (economics, women's studies, political science & anthropology, to name a few);
 - managers and members from both some of the largest and some of the smallest co-ops and credit unions in Canada; and
 - several international partners.

Our team is also spread across Canada, with our key research clusters spread from sea-to-sea (Victoria-Saskatoon-Ottawa-Halifax).

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- ✓ Despite these challenges, we are dedicated to staying true to the spirit of a CURA, in which community and university partners have an equal say in directing the research and in participating in activities. We have spent important time and energy in our first year building effective communication processes across both distance and disciplines.
- ✓ As has been highlighted in our [past 3 newsletters](#) there are over a dozen exciting research projects underway across the country, each dealing with a different aspect of the co-operative difference.
- ✓ Our first face-to-face **MCD Research Network** Meeting brought nearly 30 of our network members to Fredericton in the spirit of collaboration, sharing and moving our research agenda forward.
- ✓ As our network looks forward to the upcoming year, we feel confident in the strong foundation we have built in both our infrastructure and our relationships. This strong foundation will help our research stay focused on our key [objectives](#), and ensure that all partners remain strongly engaged in the process.

We are also keen to broaden our network and reach out to new audiences. If you are interested in becoming involved in our research, or simply wish to learn more, do not hesitate to contact us!

Wishing you a wonderful summer!



Dr. Sonja Novkovic Academic Co-Director,
Measuring the Co-operative Difference Research Network
Professor of Economics, Saint Mary's University



Katherine Kitching
Academic Coordinator, Measuring the Co-operative
Difference Research Network
Based at Saint Mary's University

If you are looking for any of the following, visit www.cooperativedifference.coop

- List of projects
- More details on research partners
- Network activities to date
- Network structure



MCD Research Network Meeting in Fredericton, NB, May 31

Nearly 30 members of the **Measuring the Co-operative Difference Research Network** gathered in Fredericton, New Brunswick on May 31 for the first face-to-face meeting. Academic and community-based researchers as well as students and government representatives joined together to take stock of the rapid development of the **MCD Research Network** over the past year and to forge the path to the research, governance and dissemination goals set for the next four years.

The day began bright and early for the Management Committee.



The day was packed with presentations, discussions about engagement of network members, co-operative inquiry methodology (thanks to a presentation by Peter Hough), a world café session that reviewed the overall research agenda and goals, defining the “co-operative difference” and a review of the innovation and internal systems of the network.



When asked what was valuable about the meeting, the members said:

- “learning about all the great research projects”
- “meeting key researchers in co-operation for the first time”
- “learning to navigate the website and the online reporting system”
- “teamwork”
- “meeting face-to-face”

Call for webinar speakers! Have a co-op research project, initiative or case study you want to share with the wider community (open to international speakers as well)? [Contact us today.](#)



Update on Project: Co-operative Sustainability Reporting & Planning Scorecard

This co-operative social and environmental accounting and reporting tool is continually being refined to help measure sustainability and planning within co-operatives.

A "Pilot" version of the Scorecard was developed through the invaluable support of Pilot Project Co-operatives, Co-op Atlantic and Researchers. During the pilot phase, the Scorecard was segregated into sections and five pilot co-operatives completed sections of the Scorecard to measure their co-operative. The tool will be launched in May-June for a first wave of usage by any consumer co-operatives which are members of Co-op Atlantic. For more information, visit

<http://www.cooperativedifference.coop/page/40-Atlantic-A1-Sustainability>



-Jeff Cheverie, Mount Saint Vincent University (student working with Dr. Leslie Brown and the Atlantic Cluster)

Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation Awards Student Scholarships

The 2011 scholarship recipients are:

- ▽ Amy and Tim Dauphinee Scholarship (\$3,000): Philippe Lapointe, Université du Québec à Montréal
- ▽ Alexander Fraser Laidlaw Fellowship (\$1,000): Véronique Gagnon, Université de Sherbrooke
- ▽ Lemaire Co-operative Studies Award (\$1,000 each):
René Bougie, Université de Sherbrooke
Lynsey Grosfield, McGill University
Wendy Holm, Saint Mary's University (Masters of Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions)

In addition to the monetary awards, the students will receive free memberships in CASC and free registration at the 2012 CASC conference.

-Donna Balkan, Canadian Co-operative Association

Book Launched in Fredericton on May 31

National Cluster launched book, *Determined to Prosper: The Story of the Sussex Co-op, the oldest agricultural society and in the world* detailing the 170 year history of the Sussex & Studholm Agricultural Society #21 in New Brunswick . [Order today!](#)



Above: 1) John Anderson, Dave Arsenault (Manager, Sussex Co-op), David Bent, Sally Colpitts (Sussex Co-op); 2) Guests applaud author; 3) Dr. Leslie Brown from MSVU and Donna Balkan from CCA. Below: 1) Prof. Ian MacPherson (Co-op Historian); 2) Claire Gagnon (Registrar of Co-operative for New Brunswick and Tom Webb of SMU's Master's of Management in Co-operatives and Credit Unions program); 3) Guests enjoying local food; 4) Wendy Keats from the Co-operative Enterprise Council and Owen Taylor from the Capital Credit Union.



Meet Researcher Dylan Morgan, University of Ottawa, PhD in Economics (National Cluster)

Dylan studied Economics and Management (finance) in southern Alberta before moving to Ottawa to pursue a Master's in Economics. He is now working on his PhD in Economics at the University of Ottawa. Dylan balances his studies with his work with our National Cluster within the Network among many other varied activities, including playing bass in a cover band, serving as a teaching assistant, managing properties, doing research for Agriculture Canada's Environmental Health Group among other things.



What are you currently working on within the network?

I have been working on data analysis for the Network. The network has access to 8 years of program application data for the Co-operative Development Initiative that I have been compiling, mining and analyzing. We are working at extracting valuable information from this data, such as categorizing the projects, and looking at trends in applications over time.

What are you hoping to gain from involvement in the Network?

When starting off, my main goal was to gain valuable work experience to go towards my academic/research career. I was also very curious about what I would find in this data. I am familiar with several agriculture co-op organizations around southern Alberta, and I am excited to be developing a broader understanding about this form of business enterprise.

How would you define the co-operative difference?

For me, the biggest difference of a co-op organization is that it does not necessarily fit into the strict economic definition of a profit maximizing firm. I am very curious as to look at these research results through the lens of economic theory.

Coordinator Erin Hancock meets ICA President

Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance visited the Canadian Co-operative Association prior to heading to Toronto to be the keynote speaker for CCA's Institute for Co-operative Leadership in February.



Co-operative Research Priorities Project – Fill out quick survey and help create comprehensive database of co-op research for last 5 years

Canada's two national co-operative associations are continuing their efforts to help establish research priorities aimed at building knowledge about the co-op sector. The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and the Conseil canadien de la co-opération et de la mutualité (CCCM) are working in partnership with the federal government's Rural & Co-operatives Secretariat to further Canada's co-op research agenda.

A process to adopt formal priorities and strategic orientations in research is now underway. An expanded [web-based inventory of all existing co-op research in Canada](#) (sorted by topic) is being developed, in conjunction with a survey which has been widely distributed throughout the sector. This survey is an updated version of the one circulated in early 2009.

We would like to know about any research on co-operatives conducted within the last 5 years – either done at the university level, or on the ground in our communities. More details are available from Erin Hancock (erin.hancock@coopscanada.coop) who is Acting Project Coordinator for the Co-operative Research Project.

Deadline is June 15 (or contact Erin Hancock if you will need more time).

http://www.cooperativedifference.coop/assets/files/Research_Priorities_Survey.2011.doc

Many Network Members attend Annual CASC and ANSER Conferences in Fredericton, NB June 1-3,2011

The Network was extremely active within the annual conferences of both the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation and the Association for Non-Profit and Social Economy Research. See their presentations outlined below.

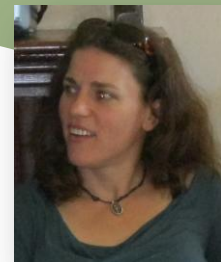
Presentation or Panel Title	Network Members Involved
Panel: The Dynamic World of Nonprofit Organizations' Advocacy (ANSER)	Sarah Amyot (student from National Cluster)
The Co-operative Model in Atlantic Canada: Can it still be an answer to today's issues? (CASC+ANSER)	Sonja Novkovic (Academic Co-Director), Leslie Brown (Atlantic Cluster Lead), David Bent (student in National Cluster), Marcel Garvie (Atlantic Cluster)
Co-operative and the Community information Database (CASC)	Adrian Egbers (National Cluster)
Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation 1)Co-operative Management as Social Entrepreneurship (Stephanie and Sonja) 2)Forging Alternatives: Starting and Integrative Health Co-operative in Victoria (Ian) 3)Co-operative Networks (Sonja) (CASC)	Stephanie Guico (student with Atlantic Cluster), Sonja Novkovic (Academic Co-Director), Ian MacPherson (National Cluster)
Building a Co-operative Research Agenda (CASC+ANSER)	John Anderson (Principal Investigator), Lou Hammond Ketilson (Prairie Cluster Lead), Denyse Guy (National Cluster), André Leclerc (Atlantic Cluster)
Agricultural Co-operatives (CASC+ANSER)	Chaired by Michael Gertler (National Cluster)
Co-operative and Finance (CASC)	Chaired by Elizabeth Hicks (Atlantic Cluster)
Social Innovation and Fair Trade (CASC)	Chaired by J.J. McMurtry (National Cluster)
Advocacy and Public Policy in the Ontario Co-operative Movement (CASC+ANSER)	Denyse Guy (National Cluster)
Innovative Cooperation: Interdisciplinarity, Education, Diversity Panel 1)Is this crisis and opportunity? Actors from below, collective enterprise, and social innovation (Ana Maria) 2)The Importance of Co-operatives in the Canadian Social Fabric (Nick) 3)Integrating Approaches to the Co-operative Difference: The Need for Innovative Research (Nick and Ana Maria) (CASC+ANSER)	Ana Maria Peredo (Western Cluster Lead), Nick Montgomery (Student and Coordinator for Western Cluster)
European-Canadian Research Panel (CASC)	Chaired by Lou Hammond Ketilson (Prairie Cluster Lead)
Enterprise Sociale et la Recherche Partenariale (ANSER)	Chaired by Luc Thériault (National Cluster)
Sustainability and Social Economy (ANSER)	Chaired by Leslie Brown (Atlantic Cluster Lead)
Roundtable with Co-operative Practitioners (CASC)	Chaired by Denyse Guy (National Cluster)
Mapping Trends in Co-operatives and CED Panel 2)Profiling the Social Economy in Northern Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (Lou) 3) Innovation Trends in Co-operatives: What we have learned (John) (CASC)	Lou Hammond Ketilson (Prairie Cluster Lead), John Anderson (Principal Investigator) (CASC)
Co-operatives and Sustainability Panel 1)Co-operative Sustainability and Planning Practices: A Participatory Approach (Leslie, Elizabeth, Andre) 2)Supple Co-ops and the Climate Change Challenge: Issues and Options (Michael) (CASC)	Leslie Brown, Elizabeth Hicks, André Leclerc (Atlantic Cluster)
Credit Union/Caisse Populaire and Rural and Aboriginal Communities in Canada Panel 1)The Challenge of Rural Communities: Credit Unions in the Canadian Countryside (Ian) 2)Financing Aboriginal Enterprise Development: The Feasibility of Using Co-operative Models (Lou) (CASC)	Ian MacPherson (National Cluster), Lou Hammond Ketilson (Prairie Cluster Lead)
Issues in the Social Economy in Atlantic Canada (Meet the Authors) 1)Overview of the Book and Issues (Leslie and Sonja) 2)The Social Economy of Atlantic Canada (Luc) 4)Evaluation and Measures of Performance in the Social Economy (Sonja) (CASC+ANSER)	Chaired by Sonja Novkovic (Academic Co-Director), Leslie Brown (Atlantic Cluster Lead), Luc Thériault (National Cluster)
Co-operative Governance (CASC)	Chaired by Michael Gertler (National Cluster)



From top: Sonja Novkovic, Leslie Brown, Marcel Garvie and David Bent; 2) John Anderson, Denyse Guy, Marie-Joëlle Brassard, Anne-Marie McInnis, Lou Hammond Ketilson, Rejean LaFlamme; 3) Ana Maria Peredo; 4) Nick Montgomery; 5) John Anderson.

Welcome Judith Lipp to National Cluster!

Judith Lipp is the Executive Director of the [TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative](#) in Toronto, a position she has held since 2008. TREC is a non-profit, co-operative that builds community owned renewable energy projects and educates the public about the importance of renewable energy, energy efficiency/conservation and the community power model. In 2010 she completed the Ontario Co-operative Association's Certificate in Co-op Management. Prior to joining TREC, Judith completed her PhD at Dalhousie University in 2008 where she examined the role of public policy in promoting renewable electricity, drawing lessons from other jurisdictions for the Canadian context. She has more than ten years research, consulting and management experience in sustainable energy issues, spanning four continents. Judith has produced more than 20 publications and presented her work orally to both academic and professional audiences on many occasions. Judith joined the National Cluster as Project Co-Lead (Community) with J.J. McMurtry from York University on the *Co-operatives and Alternative Energy* project. Welcome Judith!



Update on the Co-op Index: Diagnosing co-operatives for member/employee participation and adherence to principles and values (more info [here](#))

Since the last newsletter, a number of exciting developments have occurred with respect to the Co-op Index tool for worker co-ops:

- ✓ The tool has been translated into Finnish for use by worker co-operatives in Finland;
- ✓ In collaboration with Mondragon University, the tool will be adapted for use in Spanish co-ops;
- ✓ We are in the process of development of a system to manage and administer the tool in the future;
- ✓ A number of undergraduate students at St. Mary's university have been assisting the research team with the automation of the tool;
- ✓ The research team is excited to have John MacNamara of the US Federation of Worker Co-ops and of Union Cab worker Co-op in Madison, Wisconsin joining us in Halifax this summer as a new PhD student in Management(SMU).

Greg MacLeod Wins CASC Award of Merit

[Dr. Greg MacLeod](#), founder and former director of the [Tompkins Institute for Human Values and Technology](#) at Cape Breton University and a leading authority on community economic development, is the winner of the 2011 [Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation](#) (CASC) Award of Merit.

Erin Hancock
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Measuring the Co-operative Difference



RESEARCH NETWORK

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