

# EDUCATION



**E**ducation is of fundamental importance to co-operatives. In fact, *Education, Training and Information* is the fifth of seven international co-operative principles. The Statement of Co-operative Identity states that *Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, and elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public—particularly young people and opinion leaders—about the nature and benefits of co-operation.* Given the guidance of this principle, there is a wide range of education initiatives that co-operatives can access; from informal to formal, to implement and demonstrate this principle within their organizations.

In Canada co-operative education opportunities are rich with many co-operatives, mutuals, outside service providers and universities offering various educational options for members, staff and directors.

On the formal side of the spectrum, there are several universities offering course and programs as well as academics conducting research on various aspects of co-operatives. There are several initiatives throughout the country that introduce primary and elementary schools students to the co-operative movement. Many large co-operatives in Canada, or sectors of co-operatives, have developed programs where directors, executives, and staff learn about technical topics of co-operatives. Due diligence in today's complex business environment has seen a rise in the commitment to governance education over the past decade.

As we move along the spectrum, many co-operatives and mutuals offer workshops and seminars. Campaigns, such as Co-op Week, held annually during the month of October, provide co-operatives and mutuals with an opportunity to celebrate, raise awareness, and inform the public about the role and value of co-operative enterprises.

“INTRODUCING AND INVOLVING OTHERS INTO THE CO-OPERATIVE AND MUTUALIST MOVEMENT IS A CONTINUOUS ENDEAVOR

## IN NUMBERS

**7**  
UNIVERSITY  
RESEARCH CENTRES  
ON CO-OPERATIVES  
AND MUTUALS



**10**  
UNIVERSITY  
PROGRAMS



**180**  
INFORMAL TRAINING  
PROGRAMS

# working together

strengthening our contribution  
coast to coast to coast  
shared leadership & networking  
co-operatives and mutuals

## The power of co-operative education

Introducing and involving others into the co-operative and mutualist movement is a continuous endeavor and many of student initiatives specifically target young people. Co-op youth camps, school programs and youth services co-ops (YSC) have been key engagement initiatives for decades.

Co-op youth camps and co-operative teaching programs were founded to introduce youth to the co-operative model. Every summer, hundreds take part in initiatives fostering co-operative values and how to put these notions into practice.

YSC offer a somewhat different educational experience. A group of twelve to fifteen high school students create their own summer jobs by developing a business. These co-operatives provide services to communities such as painting, lawn mowing, landscaping, etc. Every year, 170 YSCs are created across Canada, reaching nearly 2,000 young people, who are lead by nearly 300 advisors. These co-ops generate nearly half a million dollars in annual sales.



## Our members in this sector

The **Institut de recherche et d'éducation pour les coopératives et les mutuelles de l'Université de Sherbrooke (IRECUS)** supports education and multidisciplinary research on co-operation and mutualism. **IRECUS** works closely with faculties and departments at the Université de Sherbrooke that are interested in the co-operative movement and with various national and international co-operatives.

The **Center for Co-operative and Community-Based Economy** is a focal point on the University of Victoria campus. Its promotion of interdisciplinary research and learning around co-operative and community-based economy engages many faculty members.

**Saint Mary's University** and the Sobey School of Business are leaders in co-operative management education. They proudly offer a Master of Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions and a Graduate Diploma in co-operative management. Both programs cultivate a deep understanding of co-operatives, credit unions and mutuals within a globalized, part time on-line curriculum.

Established in 1984, the **Centre for the Study of Co-operatives** is an interdisciplinary teaching and research institute located on the University of Saskatchewan campus in Saskatoon. The Centre undertakes scholarly, often interdisciplinary, research about co-operatives and political, social and economic issues relating to co-operatives.