



White Paper on Young Emerging Co- operators of Canada: Perspectives and Issues

By:

Canada's Emerging Co-operators



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Setting the context

ABOUT CEC

Canada's Emerging Co-operators are the future leaders of Canada's co-operative and mutual sector. CEC aims to :

- understand and respond to the needs of emerging co-op leaders,
- to shape the future leadership of the co-operative and mutual sector in Canada,
- create a space for youth to highlight, expand and celebrate their involvement in the co-operative sector.

ABOUT THE YOUTH DELEGATION

Funded by the Emerging Co-operators Education Fund (ECEP), the Youth Delegation is a group of young co-operators who gathered at the 2022 Congress of Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada, under the coordination of Canada's Emerging Co-operators.

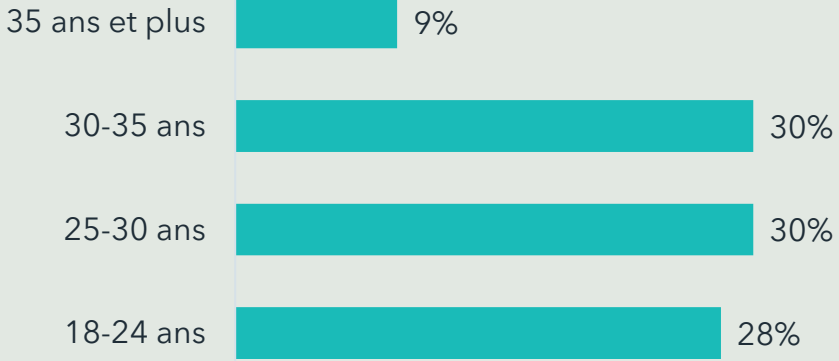
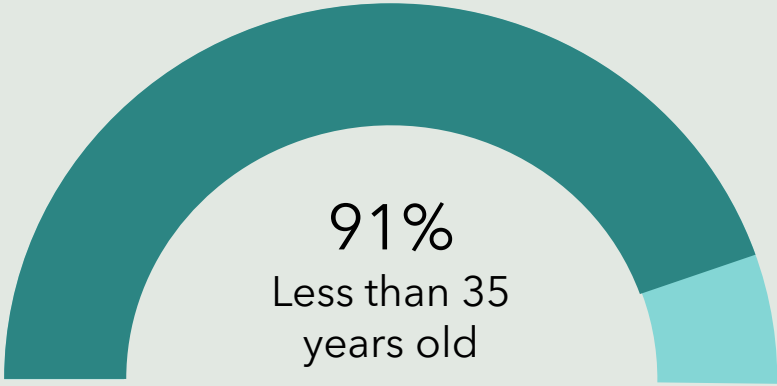
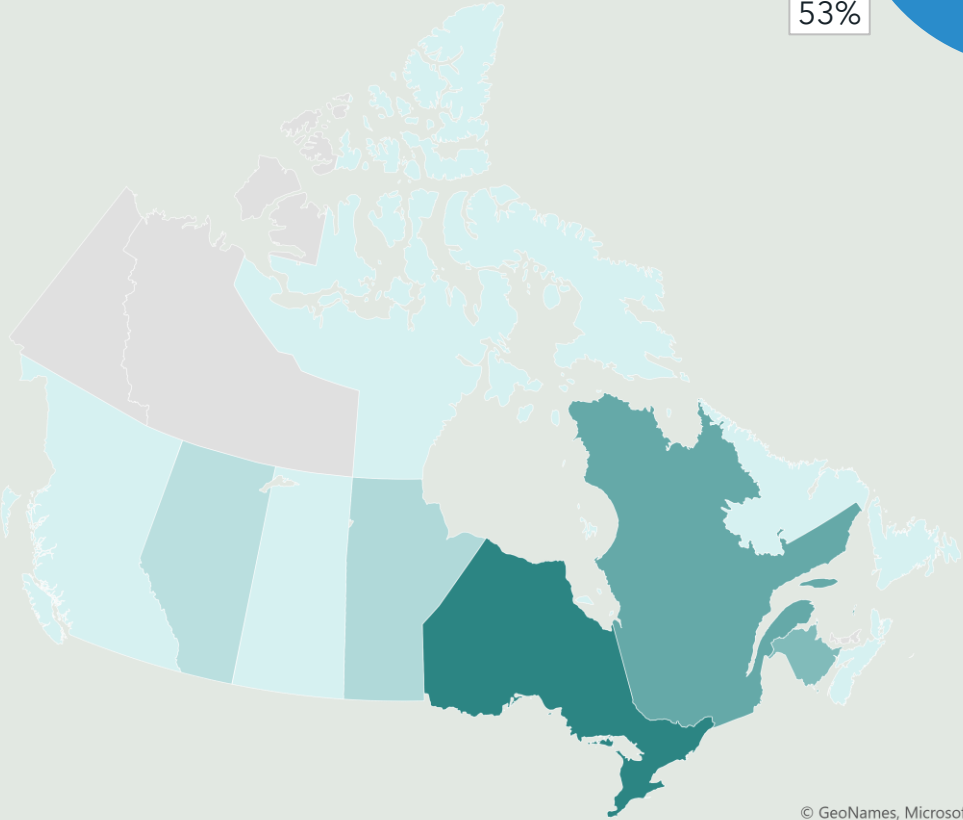
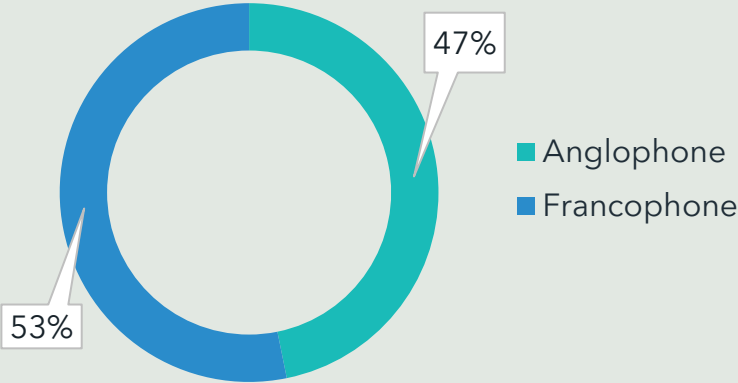
Coming from various provinces and fields, these young people had a lot to say about the perspectives and challenges of the next generation of co-operators.

Introduction and Context of the White Paper

- For the past few years, Canada's Emerging Co-operators has been managing funding for the Emerging Co-operators Education Fund (ECEF). With the fund almost depleted, CEC decided to use of these funds to bring a youth delegation to the 2022 annual Congress of Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada, while at the same time taking the opportunity to survey the needs of the next generation of co-operatives and mutuals.
- Resulting of a Canada-wide consultation with our co-operative and mutualist partners and a panel discussion at CMC's 2022 Congress, this white paper is intended to be the voice of the next generation of co-operatives in order to better understand their issues, their challenges and, ultimately, their needs.

Delegation in Brief

57 young people



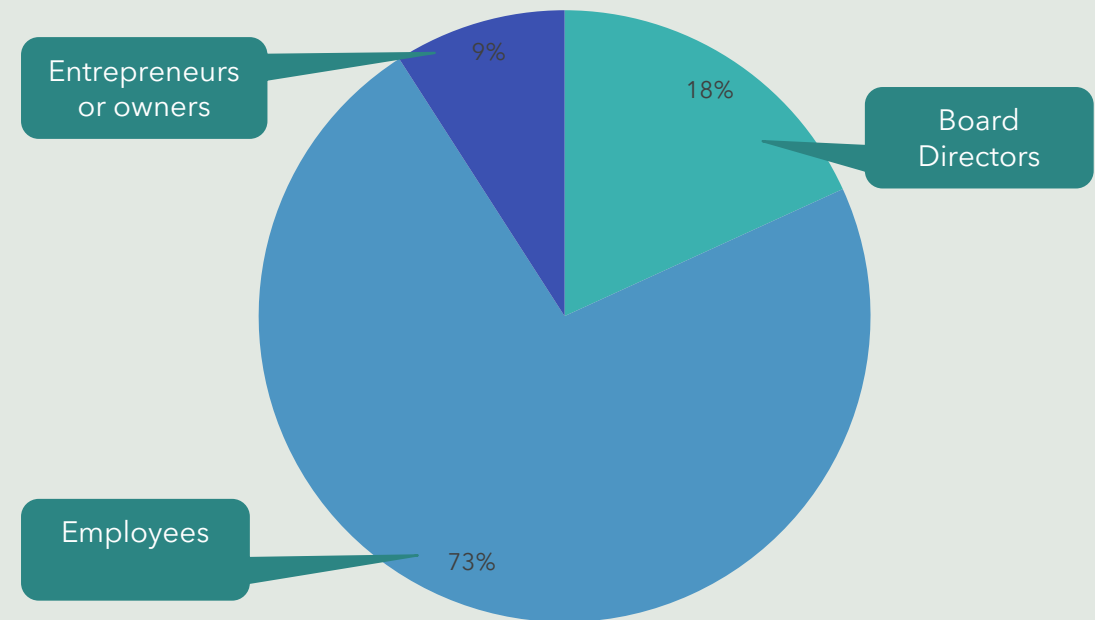
Delegation in brief

57 participants

More than 13 industries represented:

- Administration and Support;
- Agriculture;
- Retail Trade
- Economic and Community Development;
- Education and Training;
- Energy and Utilities;
- Finance and Insurance;
- Accommodation and Food Services;
- Real Estate and Rental Services;
- Professional Services;
- Transportation and Warehousing;
- Other

Distribution of respondents by role in the co-operative and mutualist world



Recommendations in Brief

- Recommendation 1: Allow the next generation to develop.
- Recommendation 2: Invest in the next generation.
- Recommendation 3: Make room for the next generation at the big table.
- Recommendation 4: Diversify the background around the table.
- Recommendation 5: Develop a presence within the educational system.
- Recommendation 6: Make co-operative involvement more credible.

Giving the next generation the means to achieve their ambitions



Allow the
next
generation to
develop.



Invest in the
next
generation.

Recommendation 1: Allow the Next Generation to Develop.

- Training to develop in the co-operative and mutualist environment is limited and expensive for the next generation. Thus, our young people cannot access higher involvement in our networks because of the lack of training that would allow them to develop. Access to networking events in the co-operative and mutualist world is often expensive or remote for young people, who are often forced to work during these periods. As a result, young co-operators and mutualists are unable to develop their networks and therefore miss out on professional opportunities, while also missing out on great inter-co-operation opportunities.

Best practices:

- The Emerging Co-operators Education Fund (ECEP).
- Enable co-modality or conference recording.
- Free up young employees interested in co-operation to participate in development and networking events.
- Promote the implementation of centralized resource centers concerning co-operative involvement and disseminate them.

Recommendation 2: Invest in the Next Generation.

- Youth organizations are in a precarious situation and generally depend on sponsoring organizations, giving them the right of life or death on the sustainability of the youth organization. This uncertainty that hangs over youth organizations does not allow them to undertake structuring actions to promote and help the next generation.

Best practices:

- Encourage sustainable partnerships with our youth organizations by giving them freedom of action and funding.
- Offer preferential rates proportional to the budget of young professionals in the co-operative world.
- Implement venture capital type financing for co-operative start-ups.

Giving a Voice to Youth

Make room
for the next
generation
at the table.

Diversify the
background
around the
table.

Recommendation 3: Make Room for the Next Generation at the Table.

- Although diversity is valued in the co-operative and mutualist world, age diversity is still difficult to promote. Indeed, a young candidate cannot have the experience of a senior candidate, which leads many co-operatives and mutuals to age in their governance.

Best practices:

- Have dedicated moments to address the issues inherent to the generational distances in our co-ops.
- Reserve places of responsibility for young people and organize ways to consult them on the important issues of our co-operatives (shadow boards, reserved seats).
- Create places for exchanges between the experience and the youth of the co-operative movement (mentoring, internships, coaching).

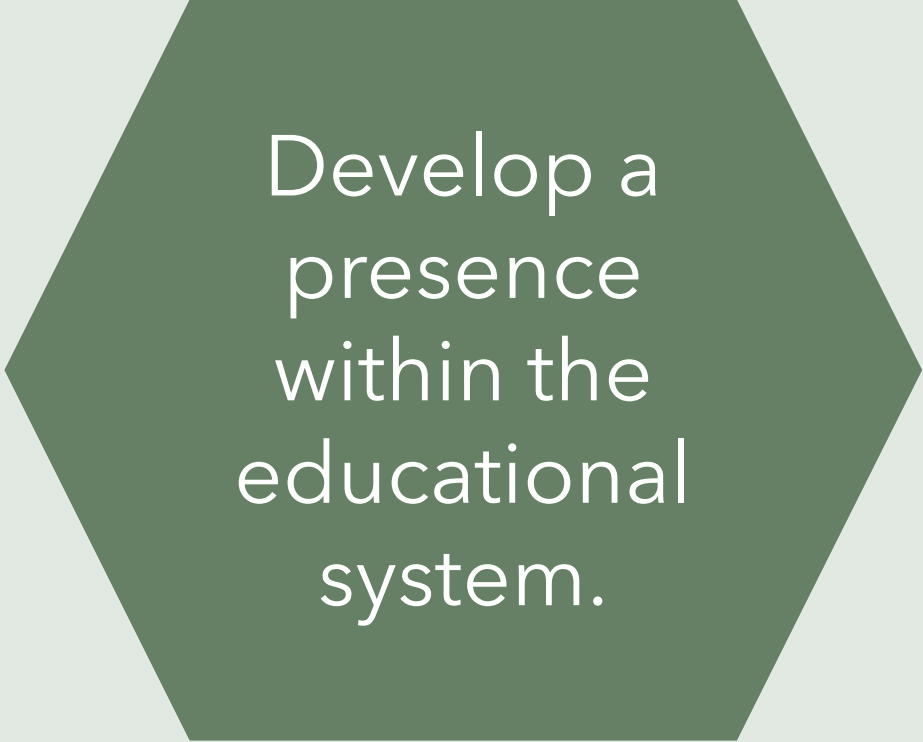
Recommendation 4: Diversify the background around the table.

- Gender and ethnic diversity also still has a hard time finding its place in some of our co-ops and mutuals, as highlighted by the consultations conducted. Several participants mentioned that this is an issue that needs to be addressed and yet it is still an issue that is not addressed very much within our organizations. Co-operatives and mutuals are depriving themselves of valuable contributions and important points of view.


Best practices:

- Raise awareness and train the actors of our organizations on diversity issues.
- Accompany people from the co-operative sector when they arrive in the co-operative sector, in order to facilitate this paradigm shift.

Build the Reputation of the Co-operative Movement for the Next Generation.



Develop a presence within the educational system.



Make co-operative involvement more credible.

Recommendation 5: Develop a Presence Within the Educational System.

- Co-operative and mutualist notions are not very present in school curricula. Thus, co-operatives and mutuals are not valued as much as the importance of the movement and not very known by the next generation. This leads many competent young people not considering the co-operative movement as a promising entrepreneurial or career option. Co-operation and mutuality should not be limited to programs that deal explicitly with the subject, but should be present in a transversal way in the curriculum.

Best practices:

- Develop a presence of childhood education in higher education (start-up of student co-operatives, theoretical trainings, etc.).
- Promote co-operative involvement as a way for students to develop concrete skills and knowledge (teacher training, development of pedagogical sheets, etc.).
- Promote the importance of the co-operative economy in terms of economic spin-offs and jobs in order to present the opportunities for young professionals (conferences, testimonials, etc.).

Recommendation 6: Make Co-operative Involvement More Credible.

- Involvement in co-operatives and mutuels is not very valued outside the movement and sometimes even within the movement itself, between co-operatives and mutuels of different sizes. Silos exist between co-operatives and mutuels of different sectors, sizes and provinces.

Best practices:

- Present co-operatives as a career and involvement opportunity that is valued and rewarding (testimonials, job posting portals, etc.).
- Encourage and promote the development of promotional tools for the co-operative model targeted at youth.
- Value the co-operative involvement between the sectors of the Canadian movement and encourage it, beyond our respective sectors of activity by putting forward the networking between co-operatives/ inter-co-operation.

Conclusions

Allow the next generation to develop.

Invest in the next generation.

Make room for the next generation at the table.

Diversify the background around the table.

Develop a presence within the educational system.

Make cooperative involvement more credible.

Challenges of the Co-operative Movement as Perceived by Youth

- Reaching out to youth to promote and educate them about the co-operative movement and the opportunities it presents.
- Breaking down the silos of the co-operative movement in order to resonate within the Canadian educational and entrepreneurial network.
- Addressing issues of diversity in all its forms within the co-operative movement.
- Maintaining our relevance and distinction as a movement, despite an increasingly competitive environment.

Credits

We would like to thank all the organizations that made this white paper possible, namely

- Canada's Emerging Co-operators for co-ordinating the workshops and developing the white paper.
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- Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada for logistical support for the consultation.

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