



WOMEN CO-OPERATIVES REPORT



COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS



OVERVIEW

There are an estimated of 65 to 80 co-operatives and mutuals serving women or led by women in Canada. An estimated of 55 to 65 are listed on the [CMC directory](#) while 10 to 15 are listed on provincial associations websites. Among these, it is estimated that 33% exclusively or mostly serve women while 67% serve women alongside other groups.

Among co-operatives surveyed which exclusively or mostly serve women, 46% were in Western Canada, 12% in Ontario, 22% in Quebec, and 22% in Eastern Canada. 67% were operating in communities with fewer than 100,000 people and 33% were operating in larger communities.

Overall, 45% were in operation for fewer than five years, 33% for 5 to 10 years and 22% more than 10 years. 89% operated as non-profits while 11% were for-profit.



03

Among co-operatives and mutuals which either exclusively or mostly serve women, 44% indicated that they serve women exclusively while 56% claimed they primarily serve women. 100% are primarily led by women.

Overall, 12% of co-operatives and mutuals which either exclusively or mostly serve women indicated that their revenues were above \$500,000. The remaining 88% reported lower revenues. On average, co-operatives and mutuals exclusively or mostly serving women reported that 36% of their annual funding was derived from government.

Among leaders representing organizations exclusively or mostly serving women, 22% indicated the organization was led primarily by paid staff and 11% said it was primarily led by volunteers. The remaining 67% were led by a combination.

When questioned regarding challenges facing their organization, 67% indicated that funding was among their top two challenges. 33% indicated that human resources was among their top two challenges.

The leadership survey asked specific questions to gauge co-operatives and mutuals priorities corresponding with the Government of Canada's Investment Readiness Program. Leaders of organizations which exclusively or mostly serve women were asked to rate their organization's priorities regarding developing new products, finding new markets, developing business plans, and finding technical expertise.

Three sample co-operatives and mutuals serving women are featured at the end of the report.

RESEARCH

Number of co-operatives

Community Researchers conducted a review of the Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada online directory and each of the Canadian provincial co-operative associations.

The review determined that there are an estimated of 65 to 80 co-operatives serving women or led by women. It is estimated that 55 to 65 of the co-operatives serving women were listed on the CMC directory while 10 to 15 were listed as members on provincial associations websites.

A subsequent survey of co-operative leaders across Canada determined that among co-operatives and mutuals serving women, 33% exclusively or mostly served women while 67% indicated they served women alongside other groups. The remaining analysis in this segment report only considers data from co-operatives that either exclusively or mostly serve women.

Location

Eastern Canada

22%

Quebec

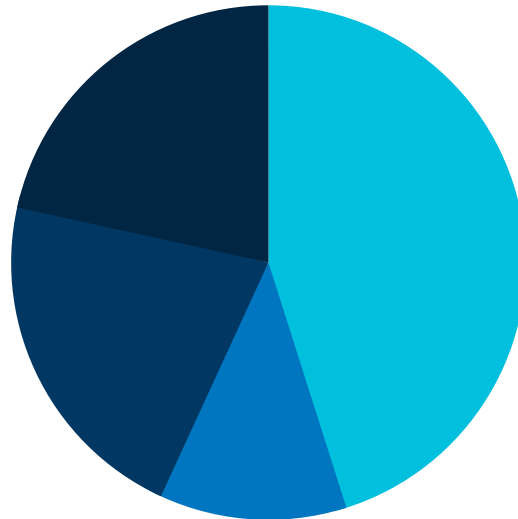
22%

Ontario

12%

Western Canada

46%



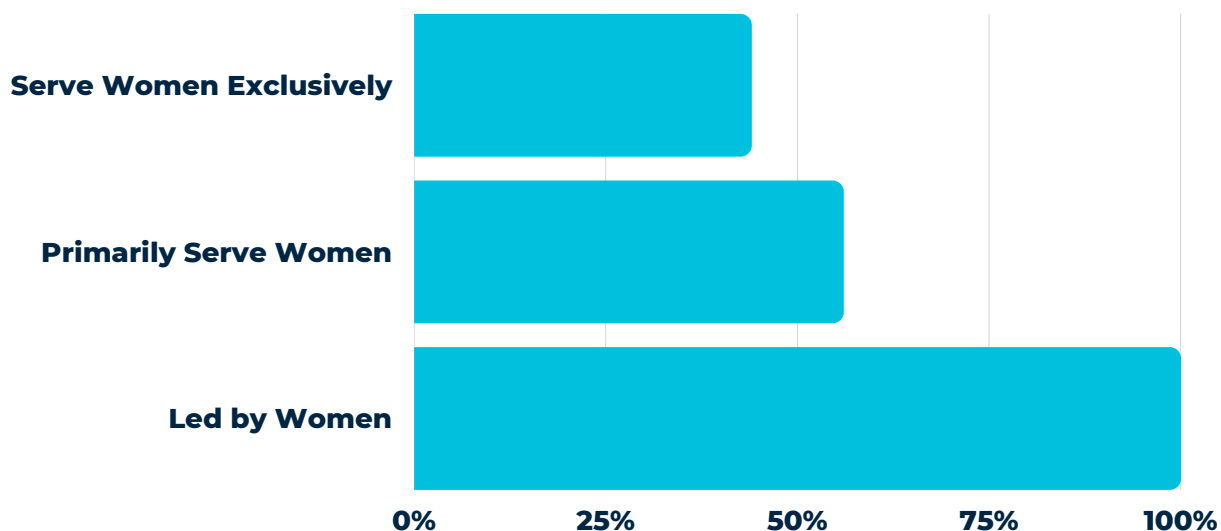
The leadership survey asked respondents to describe their location and the community size in which they serve. Among co-operatives and mutuels surveyed which exclusively or mostly serve women, 46% were in Western Canada, 12% were in Ontario, 22% were in Quebec, and 22% were in Eastern Canada. Among co-operatives and mutuels surveyed which exclusively or mostly serve women, 67% were operating in communities with fewer than 100,000 people and 33% were operating in larger communities.



Status and Lifetime

The leadership survey asked respondents to describe certain parameters of their organization including years in operation and their business structure. Overall, among co-operatives and mutuals surveyed which exclusively or mostly serve women, 45% were in operation for fewer than five years. 33% were in operation for 5 to 10 years and the remaining 22% had been operating for more than 10 years. Among co-operatives and mutuals surveyed which exclusively or mostly serve women, 89% operated as non-profits and 11% were for-profit.

Mission



Respondents to the leadership survey were asked the extent to which their organization served women and the extent to which their organization was led by women. Among co-operatives and mutuals which either exclusively or mostly serve women, 44% indicated that they serve women exclusively while 56% claimed they primarily serve women. According to the survey, 100% of co-operatives and mutuals which exclusively or mostly serve women are majority led by women. None of the organizations surveyed had a minority or no women leaders.

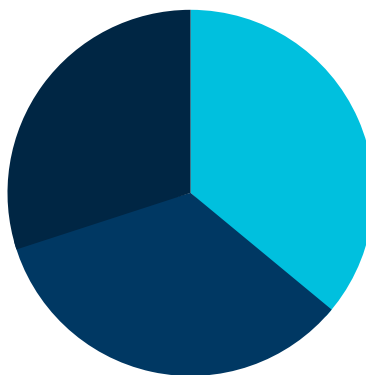
Revenue and funding

Respondents to the leadership survey were questioned regarding their organization's annual revenues, along with the proportion of revenues generated through earned revenue or sales, donations and corporate partnerships, and government funding.

Overall, 12% of co-operatives and mutuals which either exclusively or mostly serve women indicated that their revenues were above \$500,000. 33% had revenues between \$250,000 and \$500,000, 22% reported revenues of \$100,000 to \$250,000, and the remaining 33% were under \$100,000. None of the survey respondents which exclusively or mostly served women reported revenues of more than \$1,000,000.

Earned Revenue or Sales

30%



Government Funding

36%

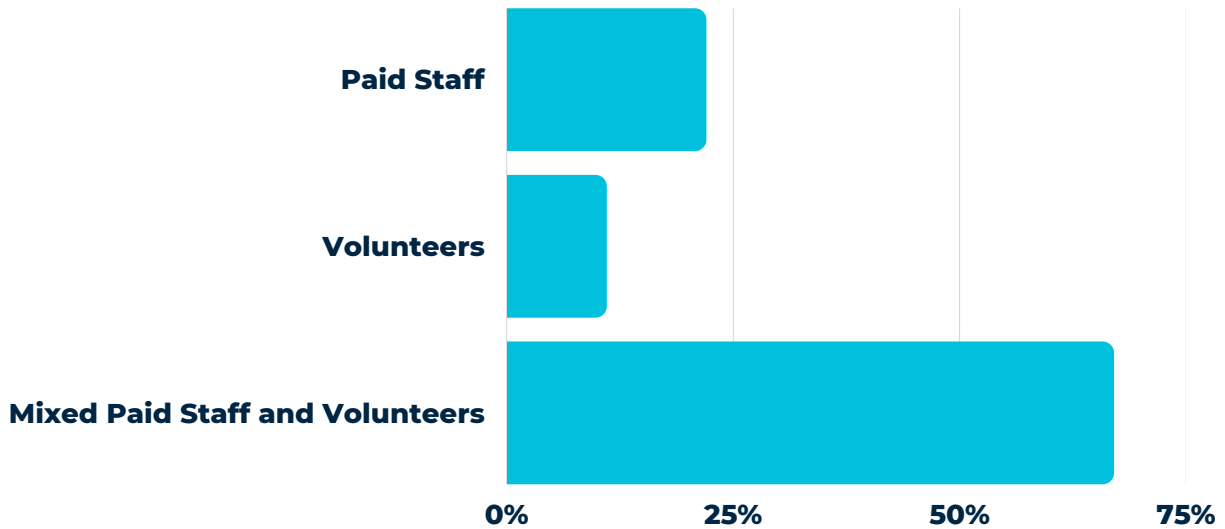
Donations or Sponsorships

34%

On average, co-operatives and mutuals exclusively or mostly serving women reported that 36% of their annual funding was derived from government funding. On average, leaders representing these organizations indicated that 34% of their revenues were from donations or corporate sponsorships. The average amount of revenue from earned revenues or sales was 30%.

Leadership and challenges

Respondents to the leadership survey shared whether their leadership was primarily managed by paid staff, volunteers, or a combination. Additionally, an open-ended question asked leaders to describe the top two challenges facing their organization.

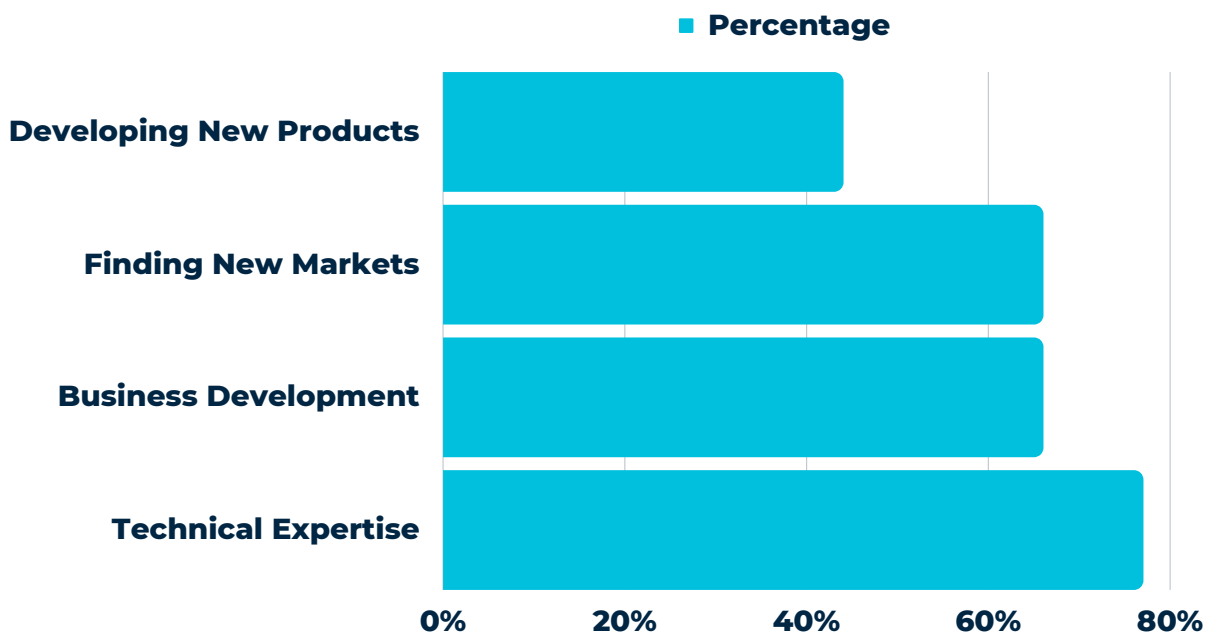


Among leaders representing co-operatives and mutuals either exclusively or mostly serving women, 22% indicated the organization was led primarily by paid staff and 11% said it was primarily led by volunteers. The remaining 67% of respondents indicated that their organization was led by a combination of paid staff and volunteers.

When questioned regarding challenges facing their organization, 67% of leaders representing co-operatives and mutuals which exclusively or primarily served women indicated that funding was among their top two challenges. This was the most frequent response overall in this group. 33% of leaders indicated that human resources was among their top two challenges. Other challenges mentioned by leaders included governance, growing membership, inflation, knowledge transfer, succession planning, and technology.

Organizational priorities

The leadership survey asked specific questions to gauge co-operatives and mutuels priorities corresponding with the Government of Canada's Investment Readiness Program. Leaders of organizations which exclusively or mostly serve women were asked to rate their organization's priorities regarding developing new products, finding new markets, developing business plans, and finding technical expertise.



In total, 44% of co-operatives and mutuels which exclusively or mostly serve women indicated that developing new products was a priority. 11% claimed that it was high priority while 33% said it was medium priority. The remaining 56% indicated it was low priority. 66% indicated that finding new markets was a priority. 11% claimed it was high priority while 55% said it was medium priority. 66% also claimed developing business plans was a priority. However, 33% called it high priority while 33% said it was medium priority. 77% believed that finding technical expertise was a priority. 33% thought it was a high priority and 44%, a medium priority.

SAMPLE CO-OPERATIVES IN SECTOR

10

Cirquantique - Cirque & Burlesque

- Established: 1993
- Location: Montreal, QC
- Mission: Cirquantique is a women's co-operative that self-produces shows combining circus and burlesque arts.
- Website: www.cirquantique.com

Barsa Kelly/Cari-Can co-op

- Established: 1993
- Location: Toronto, ON
- Mission: Barsa Kelly/Cari-Can Co-operative Homes Inc. is a non profit housing co-operative serving the need for quality affordable housing for two groups: The Ontario Coalition of Visible and Minority Women and the Congress of Black Women of Canada.
- Website: www.bkcc.ca

Just 4 Moms and Kids Co-operative

- Established: 1988
- Location: Scotland, ON
- Mission: Just 4 Moms & Kids is a non-profit corporation that provides quality inclusive childcare services to Scotland and its surrounding communities
- Website: j4mk.com



WOMEN CO-OPERATIVES REPORT



info@canada.coop



www.canada.coop



COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS