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It was my great privilege to attend the International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly and the official launch of the International Year of Co-operatives in Cancun on November 16. It was a week of celebration and fireworks, but also of an incredible sense of co-operative power, with more than two thousand delegates from around the world in attendance. The ICA Board and delegates were addressed by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and ILO Director General Juan Somavia in a video message, and Mexican President Felipe Calderón in person.

Dr. Lou Hammond
Ketilson (on right)
in Cancun



Dr. Ian MacPherson
in Cancun

Canadian presence was felt everywhere, and so were this Network's members – Lou Hammond Ketilson in her role of Chair of the ICA Research Committee organized a Symposium *Measuring Cooperative Performance and Impact*; Tom Webb was there representing the Master in Management – Co-ops and Credit Unions program; Ian MacPherson participated in the panel on Co-operatives and Peace (read more in the [ICA digest](#)), and I gave a keynote address on the [Value of Measurement](#) for the Research Symposium. The response from those in attendance gave us a clear message that the work this Network is doing is very timely and important for the co-operative sector in Canada and around the world. The importance of research of the impact of co-operatives on society, their longevity, and their different business model are critical at the time when the world is looking for diverse and alternative ways to organize economic activities.

There is a consensus among ICA members that the opportunity offered by the 2012 International year should be seized to create a decade of growth for the co-operative sector worldwide. We can all contribute to that goal and the Year 2012 in our own way.

Wishing you a festive holiday season! Enjoy ringing in the New Year, 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives!



Dr. Sonja Novkovic Academic Co-Director,
Measuring the Co-operative Difference
Research Network
Professor of Economics, 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



Congratulations to J.J. McMurtry!

J.J. was presented the Co-operative Spirit Award from the Ontario Co-operative Association on October 19 in Burlington. The award recognized the leadership and effort J.J., along with colleague Brenda Gainer, contributed to creating the Co-operative Management Certificate Program within the Schulich School of Business at York University. The program will be welcoming its third cohort in 2012. J.J. is co-leading the project on *Co-operatives and Alternative Energy Production* with the National Cluster of the Network with Judith Lipp, Executive Director of Toronto Renewable Energy Co-op.



Congratulations to Linda Moulin!

Linda has recently become the co-lead working with Dr. Lou Hammond Ketilson for the project *Measuring the Impact of Credit Unions on Wealth Building in Communities*. Linda is the Senior Vice President of Affinity Credit Union in Saskatoon, SK. At the Credit Union Executives Society meeting in Las Vegas in early November, Moulin was awarded the CUES Future Leader Award “for superior commitment to their CU, the movement and continuing education,” (CUES). Moulin served a pivotal role in the merger that grew Affinity to be among the top 10 largest credit unions in Canada.



Linda Moulin receives the 2011 CUES Future Leader award from CUES Chairman Frederick D. Healey. Photo care of CUES.

Big Thinking about Credit Unions

Dr. Lou Hammond Ketilson, Leader of the Prairie Cluster of the Network and former Director of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives at the University of Saskatchewan, was featured at the Big Thinking series on December 8. The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences hosted the breakfast on Parliament Hill, featuring Lou’s presentation [*Building resilient communities: The economic impact of Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires in Canada*](#). The event was well attended by parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, government officials and co-op sector representatives, including David Phillips, president and CEO of Credit Union Central of Canada. Parliamentarians who attended included Conservative MP Michael Chong, NDP MPs Peter Stoffer, Bruce Hyer and Joe Comartin, and Senator Wilfred Moore.



Hot Spot for Co-op Research

Canada’s two national co-operative associations are in the process of finalizing a research [portal for new co-op research](#). 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.

CCA to Co-host Rural Research Conference

The “Policy and Research in Community Investment” conference will be held in Ottawa from May 24-25, 2012. The conference is co-hosted by the Canadian Co-operative Association, the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and the Canadian Rural Health Research Society among other partners. Proposals are due January 20, 2012. Find more information at http://billreimer.net/CRRF/?page_id=720

Upcoming Events—Get your abstracts in today!

11th Conference on Canadian Studies: Co-operatives in Canada

February 20-23, 2012, Havana, Cuba

Hosted by the Chair on Canadian Studies, University of Havana, Cuba

Abstracts due January 6, 2012

http://cooperativedifference.coop/assets/files/Events/Co-operatives_in_Canada.University_of_Havana._Catedra_Estudios_Canadienses.pdf

Managing the Co-operative Difference

February 29-March 2, 2012. Moncton, New Brunswick

Abstracts due December 23, 2011

http://cooperativedifference.coop/assets/files/Events/Moncton_2012_-_Demande_de_communications_-_Call_for_pa.pdf

Promoting the Understanding of Co-operatives for a Better World

March 15-17, 2012, Venice, Italy

Hosted by the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises

Conference program available at http://www.2012.coop/sites/default/files/1313140958_n1759.pdf

Cooperative Responses to Global Challenges

March 21-23, 2012 Berlin, Germany

Register now at reduced rate with early bird bonus:

<http://www.coopsyear.hu-berlin.de/registration> (call for proposals closed)

Rural Research Workshop “Policy and Research in Community Investment” (see previous page for details)

The Changing Role of Nonprofits and the Social Economy

May 30-June 1, 2012, Waterloo, Ontario

Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research

Proposals due January 9, 2012 <http://www.anser-ares.ca/conference.php>

Joint Meetings of the Measuring the Co-operative Difference Research Network

June 24-27, 2012, University of Quebec at Montreal

This network, together with the [Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation](#), [the ICA Research Committee](#), [The Association for Co-operative Education](#), the [Quebec Co-op CURA](#) and others are organizing a major integrated co-op research conference series (a Co-op Learneds!) held right before the [CCA](#) and [CCCM](#) AGMs and joint Congress.

Abstracts due January 24, 2012

http://cooperativedifference.coop/assets/files/Events/2012_Call_for_Papers_Cooperating_for_Change_in_the_IYC_-_final.pdf

Mainstreaming Co-operation: An Alternative for the 21st Century?

July 3-5, 2012, Manchester, UK

Proposals due January 14, 2012 <http://www.co-op.ac.uk/mainstreaming-co-operation>

XVII. International Conference on Cooperative Studies (ICCS): Cooperatives in the focus of a new economic policy

September 18-20, 2012, Vienna, Austria

Proposals due April 10, 2012 <http://igt2012.univie.ac.at/en/home/>

Imagine 2012: International Conference on Co-operative Economics

October 6-8, 2012, Quebec City, Quebec

<http://www.imagine2012.coop/>

Student Research Scholarship Opportunity

The Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research is offering two student awards of \$2500 each (with additional support to attend the next ANSER conference in Waterloo, ON from May 29-June 1, 2012 as well).

Qualified candidates are graduate students pursuing research relevant to nonprofits and the social economy that contribute to policy, governance or sustainability of these enterprises. Deadline is December 20. Additional criteria apply, so find more details at the website www.anser-ares.ca. Awards have been funded through the Institute for Nonprofit Studies at Mount Royal University.

Western Cluster Update

The Western Cluster welcomes Dr. Jo-Anne Lee as the new Co-Lead for the cluster and new Acting Director for the Centre for Co-operatives and Community-based Economy at the University of Victoria. Dr. Ana Maria Peredo is leaving on sabbatical in January 2012. Dr. Lee joins the centre from the Department of Women's Studies. John Restakis of the British Columbia Co-operative Association and Western Cluster Co-Lead welcomes Lee: "Congratulations on the new position and I look forward to continuing our joint work with the Centre and this Community-University Research Alliance."

Prairie Cluster Update

The "Measuring the Impact of Credit Unions on Wealth Building in Communities: Identifying the Appropriate Indicators" project is investigating whether or not credit unions provide unique measurable benefits - such as asset building through social investments and competitive savings and loan instruments, donations and volunteer time, and good jobs - to all stakeholders. Principal Investigators Lou Hammond Ketilson from the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, USask (Saskatoon, SK) and Jessica Gordon Nembhard from John Jay College, City University of NY, NYC (USA) along with Community Partner Linda Moulin of Affinity Credit Union have been working diligently to identify and test a set of indicators that would increase understanding of the economic impacts of credit unions on their local economy, including impacts on the wealth building of their members.

The study focuses on the following questions:

- What kinds of assets do credit unions develop for their members and communities?
- How can credit union asset building and wealth accumulation be understood, identified and measured?
- What mechanisms and structures do credit unions use and/or are unique to credit unions to facilitate asset building and wealth accumulation for its members?

In early 2012 we will unveil the online survey instrument and test it with 10% of Affinity's online bankers. We will then have one more chance to refine the survey, and hope by March to have the full online survey available to all Affinity members. We eventually expect that our instrument will be used by credit unions throughout the region, and the country, to assess their own impacts, particularly on giving back to community and on asset building and wealth accumulation of their members and their surrounding communities. Full update: <http://cooperativedifference.coop/en/prairie-cluster/Research>

Conference: Managing the Co-operative Difference

Moncton, NB February 29-March 2, 2012

Call for papers

How will major changes in Canadian and global economic structures impact management practices in co-operatives? Recognizing that the capacity to adapt to these changes will significantly impact the market position of co-operatives, how can co-operatives best take advantage of their distinctive qualities as co-operatives? The conference theme builds on those two central questions.

Organizers invite papers relating to any aspect of the contemporary management and development of co-operatives, including: training and education, member participation and loyalty, human resources, support for those promoting new development projects, social responsibility and planning.

Submit abstracts to Leslie Brown, Mount Saint Vincent University at leslie.brown@msvu.ca by December 23, 2011. Call for proposals available from [http://cooperativedifference.coop/assets/files/Events/Moncton_2012 -
Demande de communications - Call for pa.pdf](http://cooperativedifference.coop/assets/files/Events/Moncton_2012_-_Demande_de_communications_-_Call_for_pa.pdf)

You are invited to join the Free Winter Webinars!

JANUARY: Microfinance versus Cooperative Finance: Is there a Difference?

January 26, 12:00pm Eastern

Featured Speaker: Milford Bateman, author of "Why Doesn't Microfinance Work?"

FEBRUARY: Co-operative Accounting – Speakers and date to be confirmed

MARCH: Alternative Energy Co-operatives

Featured Speakers: J.J. McMurtry from York University and Judith Lipp from Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative. Date TBC



CCA Staff enjoy the Network's webinar from Ottawa

Registration will soon be available at <http://cooperativedifference.coop/page/4-Events-Opportunities#Webinars>

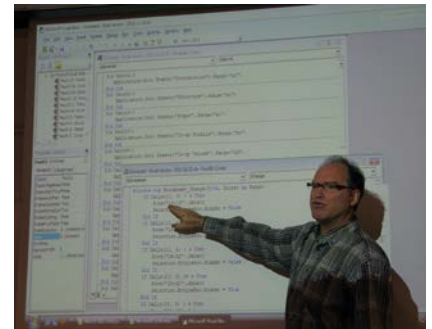
Materials from past webinars now available:

<http://cooperativedifference.coop/page/4-Events-Opportunities#Past%20webinars>

Atlantic Cluster

On Nov. 22nd, community and academic partners from the "A1" ([Sustainability Scorecard](#)) and "A2" ([Co-op Index](#)) projects gathered in Halifax for a special "tools cross-pollination workshop". Both Atlantic projects involve the development of tools that helps co-ops assess their performance in relation to social, environmental and economic indicators. This workshop gave our researchers the opportunity to learn about each other's tools and explore avenues for collaboration.

During the workshop, we discussed the common challenge of having enough questions to collect meaningful data without making the instruments prohibitively long. We learned that the A1 scorecard allows co-ops to measure their performance against other co-ops, while the A2 Index allows co-ops to measure themselves against a theoretical ideal. It was agreed that in the future, the two projects could support each other in addressing issues such as data collection, licensing of the tools, and ethical concerns.



André LeClerc, from the Université de Moncton explaining how macros are embedded into the scorecard spreadsheet in order to bring up additional questions in a specific section of the tool, but only when co-ops have prioritized that section

National Cluster

John Anderson of the Canadian Co-operative Association and Luc Thériault of the University of New Brunswick, Co-Leads on the project entitled "Survey of Co-operatives – measuring the longevity, social and economic impact" recently hired PhD (History) student David Bent to analyze agricultural co-operative data provided by the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The 1992-2008 data will be mined to identify key trends in terms of growth, volume of business, the size of their membership, as well as the number of Canadians they employ. More detailed financial information relating to surplus, assets, liabilities and equity will also be examined for this period.

Co-op Goodies (best enjoyed with... co-op milk, co-op hot cocoa, cookies from your local co-op store...you get the picture)

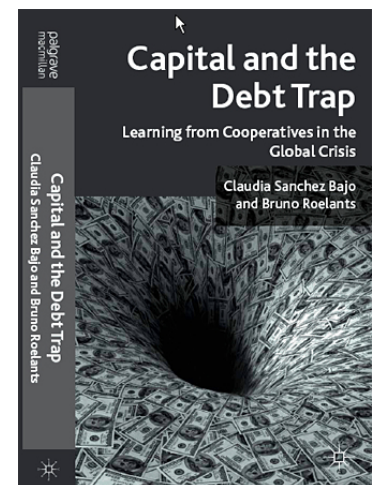
Link to interviews with Pauline Green and Tim Southam (MEC) on CBC Radio's The Current:

<http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2011/11/04/co-operatives/>

Videos to get excited for 2012:

http://www.canada2012.coop/en/canadian_co_operative_association/IYC-Video-Gallery

New book! *Capital and the Debt Trap: Learning from Co-operatives in the Global Crisis* written by Claudia Sanchez Bajo and Bruno Roelants, Secretary General of CECOP – CICOPA Europe.



Co-op Sector News

- ✓ The Canadian Co-operative Association welcomes **Denyse Guy**, Executive Director of the Ontario Co-operative Association as CCA's new Executive Director, to begin January 2, 2012.
- ✓ Join other Canadian co-operators for the **Canadian launch of 2012 *The International Year of Co-operatives*** at a location near you January 12, 2012. There will be 12 locations across Canada simultaneously launching the year. http://www.canada2012.coop/en/get_involved/be-a-part-of-the-canada-2012-launch
- ✓ The CCA Cinema released ***Securing Tomorrow***, a short film available for streaming on the web at <http://www.ccacinema.coopscanada.coop/v/securing-tomorrow> . It depicts how poor working families in the Philippines are buying microinsurance to protect the gains they've made.



Upcoming Newsletters

If you know of conferences, student opportunities or have a keen interest to write a piece for our newsletter, please contact Erin today (info below).

Measuring the Co-operative Difference



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