

NLFC: Co-operative Youth Services

Summary Report of Research & Survey Findings

May 2010

Executive Summary

The engagement of young people in co-operatives has had a long history in the co-operative movement and has changed and evolved over time. In recent years co-operatives and credit unions have been increasing their efforts to raise awareness, explore innovative initiatives and increase the participation of young Canadians in co-operatives. At this time there are many youth engagement initiatives taking place, many of which occur in isolation but all of these initiatives recognize the importance of involving young people, at as early an age as possible, for present and future success.

This report:

- Summarizes the information that was gathered by conducting a national survey on co-operative youth initiatives, and discusses activities in the areas of:
 - Camp programs
 - Sector-driven initiatives
 - Activities/events
 - Self-directed initiatives
- Presents the information in a visual format through a chart that illustrates the programs and services that are currently available, and where gaps may exist
- The report concludes with some recommendations and reflections on the information that was gathered

Based on the information that was gathered there are 6 reflections/recommendations to share. These are not hard-and-fast recommendations but areas to consider, areas that can be discussed further and reflections on the information that was gathered:

1. The role of young people in co-operative governance.
2. Developing a holistic approach that provides a continuum of products and services.
3. Developing partnerships and collaborative relationships
4. Having a dedicated staff person
5. Mixing up the best aspects of current programs
6. Meaningful involvement of young people
7. Barriers to be aware of in co-operative education
8. Sustainability of initiatives

Introduction

The engagement of young people in co-operatives has had a long history in the co-operative movement and has changed and evolved over time. In recent years co-operatives and credit unions have been increasing their efforts to raise awareness, explore innovative initiatives and increase the participation of young Canadians in co-operatives. At this time there are many youth engagement initiatives taking place, many of which occur in isolation but all of these initiatives recognize the importance of involving young people, at as early an age as possible, for present and future success.

Through grant funding obtained by the Newfoundland-Labrador Federation of Co-operatives (NLFC), from the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA), NLFC is engaged in developing and delivering a new and expanded co-op youth services program. The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) is working in partnership with NLFC and was tasked with conducting research and carrying-out a survey of existing co-op youth services in Canada. The target demographic for this project is young people between the ages of 14 and up to the age of 25 in Newfoundland and Labrador, with a focus on those 18 years of age and older who are looking for skills development and workplace experience.

CCA launched the survey (the full survey is attached as Appendix A) to compile research on co-operative youth programs across Canada in March 2010. An online survey was developed and then distributed through personal and bulk emails to organizations and staff responsible for youth initiatives e. Qualitative telephone interviews were conducted with a selection of respondents. As of the end of May 2010, CCA had gathered information from 25 of 31, or 81% of Canadian co-operative organizations and programs offering programs or services to young people.

This report:

- summarizes the information that was gathered,
- presents the information in a visual format through a chart that illustrates the programs and services that are currently available, and were gaps may exist
- the report concludes with some recommendations and reflections on the information that was gathered

Areas of activities

The information that was received from various co-operative organizations has been divided into 4 common programming/service areas:

- Camp programs
- Sector-driven initiatives
- Activities/events
- Self-directed initiatives.

1. Provincial co-operative camp programs

This section provides a summary of all of the provincial camp programs offered across the country at a provincial level and also the current relationship between Newfoundland and the Atlantic Co-operative Young Leaders (ACYL) program.

The co-operative model is not part of the formal school curriculum at any level of education across the country, with the exception of Quebec. Therefore, these camp programs have served as the primary means of educating young people about co-operatives for a number of years.

Co-operative youth camp programs have been an important tradition in the co-operative movement, beginning in the Prairie provinces with the co-operatives folk schools in the 1940's and 50's. Today, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario all host co-operative youth camp programs annually. In each case, these are core flagship programs offered by the provincial association. In each case, with the exception of Manitoba (there is a part-time person in this role), there is a full-time staff person dedicated to the youth education portfolio, of which the camp program is a significant component of the role.

Logistics

- The camp programs are available to young people ages 12-18, depending upon the province, with the core age group being youth 14-18 years of age.
- Camps range in length from being 3-4 days to 7 days.
- All are held at a camp facility using an overnight format.
- BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, run their camp programs during the summer months, through 7-8 weekly sessions.
- Manitoba and Atlantic Canada run 3-4 day sessions, offered at different times throughout the year, such as in the fall, spring, around March break, etc.

Program Structure

- Each program uses a graduated system, i.e. participants can move through the program, in each successive year, usually over a 3-4 year period.
- Continuation through the curriculum levels is possible but the levels are also associated with an age range. A participant who is older when they first attend the camp can begin at the level with peers of their same age.
- BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, have a senior or graduate level, where ideally all participants in this program have been to one of the other sessions in previous years.

Funding

- Program funding requires a mix of fundraising balanced with a nominal fee contributed by the participants. The overall program is structured on a cost recovery basis.
- Funds are sought from co-operatives and credit unions in the province to help offset the cost of the site, materials needed and room and board for the week—in Ontario and Saskatchewan each session/week of the program has a “week sponsor”.
- To cover the required participant fee, the most common set-up requires the majority of the weekly fee to be covered through a sponsorship by a co-operative or credit union and then the participant/family is required to pay a smaller portion. For example, it ends up being a \$600 to \$200 split .
- The provincial associations have found that these arrangements work well and create a connection and recognition of the investment being made by co-ops and credit unions in youth.

Staffing

- The structure varies from province to province but there are essentially 2 formats used for staffing:
 - In BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan these associations hire camp staff Many are alumni of the program, who are paid or offered stipends In the format used by Ontario, Manitoba and

- Camp staff is balanced with guest speakers and visits with people working in the community or co-operative sector
- Staffing is both a challenge and reward in these programs and something that is continually discussed as a means to identify and share best practices

Role of the co-op sector

- Primarily as a sponsorship provider—week sponsor, participant sponsor; the number of participants a co-operative or credit union sponsors varies depending upon the capacity and involvement of the co-operative or credit union
- Volunteers—a co-operative or credit union may allow staff time to attend the camp program as a facilitator, or staff may make a guest appearance giving a presentation on a specific topic within the program
- Some co-operatives and credit unions are very actively involved and support the program in all of these areas, additionally there may be staff members who support curriculum and program development in an advisory relationship with the provincial association

Operating a little differently are the two camp programs in Atlantic Canada—Atlantic Co-operative Youth Leadership (ACYL) and the Nova Scotia Co-operative Youth Alliance program.

ACYL

- Formed in 1994, with the aim of bringing the co-operative youth camp program experience to Atlantic Canada
- 3 ½ day seminars, 4-5 times moving the sessions between each of the Atlantic provinces
- The purpose of the program is essentially the same as the others with a focus on personal and group development skills with education an integration of the co-operative model.
- The target age group is 14 to 18 years
- A dedicated staff person coordinates the seminars, along with a governance board that provides strategic direction and input (number and affiliation to be clarified)
- The seminars are primarily attended by young people in the province where that seminar is being held
- Participation is sponsored by a co-operative or credit union.
- Seminar facilitators are alumni of the program and people working in the sector.

Nova Scotia Co-operative Youth Alliance

- Operated by the Nova Scotia Co-op Council (NSCC), and is therefore another program supported by the provincial association
- The distinction in the format of this program is the focus on the co-operative business model, the relationship with the principles and values, and aspects of the co-operative business development process
- 2-3 day seminar format
- The program is open to young people between the ages of 15 and 24, and the average age of a participant is 19—this is older than many of the other provincial camp programs.
- Financial support contributed by Nova Scotia Economic Development (% of program budget to be clarified)
- \$30,000 budget per year to run 3 seminars per year with 16-20 participants per session
- There is no cost to participants, and all of their meals, travel and accommodations are covered

- A dedicated staff person co-ordinates the program, along with monthly meetings and community events. Each seminar is also supported by 2 staff volunteers as well as some sector guests
- NSCC has found great success in this program with a number of participants seeking out aspects of co-operatives in their post-secondary studies and some looking to develop their own co-operatives.

Interprovincial Coordination

The coordinators of these programs meet quarterly via Skype to talk about various aspects of their programs, including challenges and opportunities that may arise and ways that they can continue to engage with young people between the camp sessions and after they have completed the program.

2. Sector-driven initiatives

This section of the report describes initiatives that are targeted at young people, have a career, skill development, or targeted member engagement focus and are supported or developed by a co-operative or credit union. This section provides best practice case example from both provincial association led initiatives and from specific co-operatives and credit unions.

Provincial association initiatives

The initiatives undertaken by the provincial associations support their overall mandate of to promote, develop and to provide education and opportunities across all co-operative sectors.

2.1 Ontario Co-operative Internship and Experience Program – Best Practice Example

This is a career-focused aimed at young people, 30 years of age and under, who have recently graduated from a university or college (interns cannot be enrolled in studies while in the program) and who are ready to begin building transferable career skills and gaining experience in the workplace. Host organizations are members of the Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op) and who have a human resources need, or special project and tasks for interns to complete within their 26 week placement.

All of the interns are taught transferable skills that can be used in any type of organization or workplace, however the placements are in co-operative or social enterprise organizations. An intensive 3-day conference is held close to the offices of On Co-op at the beginning of the internship. The event provides a strong foundation and understanding of the co-operative model, as well as a general overview of the Ontario co-operative sector, from which they can gain a better understanding of their own organization's work. This forms the necessary foundation of their placements, and interns gain an appreciation of the values and structure of the model, to which most of them have never before been exposed.

The average participant is a recent college/university graduate, usually between 22 and 29 years of age. A very small percentage know anything about co-ops before going through the program, but a high percentage finish their placements with a great appreciation for the model. Based on program evaluations, completed by the interns, the co-operative model seems to resonate with this generation of young adults.

The funding for this program is provided by Service Canada, who covers the costs of minimum wage for 30 interns (usually 2 intakes of 15 per year), with a supplement to the minimum wage from the host organization of \$3/hour. In addition, funding from Service Canada contributes towards the Project Manager's salary, and all costs associated with the 3-day conference. For 2009-2010 funding provided to On Co-op for the program was over \$350,000 for the full year (2 intakes).

On Co-op has been running this program for the past 8 years. More recently similar internship programs, also supported by Service Canada, have been started at the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association and the BC Co-operative Association. Although each program is supported through Service Canada the arrangements and requirements are slightly different depending upon the province.

2.2 On Co-op curriculum project

Through financial support provided by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, On Co-op is working to create an interactive and thought-provoking curriculum about the co-operative philosophy, movement, and business model for high school students enrolled in philosophy, history, civics, and business courses in Ontario. The development of this curriculum began in April 2010 and is scheduled to be ready for distribution by February 2011 and has a \$14,000 budget. The final products will include a 30-page curriculum guide/activity book for teachers, easy to use activities and resources for students, and material, including swag items to build the recognition of the cast of co-operative organizations supporting the material.

Some of the key components of the curriculum being developed include:

- Curriculum material and resources that are brief, easily understood and immediately accessible for teachers.
- All curriculum developed must link directly to Ontario curriculum expectations.
- The final product must be immediately attractive, and distinct from other high school resources.
- Content must be relevant to the student's lives—the aim is to meet this objective through curriculum that is modern, has real-world connections and applications and has a cast of recognizable animated characters that will draw a common thread throughout the material.

Many of the provincial associations also made financial contributions to the development of this project, and as a result the final products will be shared and can be replicated for the educational system within another province.

Co-operative and credit union initiatives

Initiatives taken on by co-operatives and credit unions have a definite business benefit and strategy. The investment in young people is recognition of short-term and long-term succession planning, and may take on a management, member and/or governance focus.

2.3 Co-op Atlantic

In March 2010, a meeting took place in Halifax with a number of co-operative and credit union representatives from across the Atlantic Canada provinces. The purpose of the meeting was to begin a dialogue on possible initiatives that could take place in Atlantic Canada to build and encourage youth engagement in the co-operative sector. The minutes of this meeting are awaiting review.

One outcome of the meeting was to develop a committee to further discuss possibilities raised in this initial meeting. This committee is meeting in June 2010 and an update on next steps will be provided prior to the August 2010 meeting.

2.4 GROWMARK, Inc.

GROWMARK has operations in both the United States and in Ontario with the head office for the co-operative in Bloomington, Illinois and the Ontario region office in Kitchener, Ontario. Each summer GROWMARK runs a 12-week internship program for students in their 2nd or 3rd year of a college or university program. Many of the students who participate in the internship program are in agriculture or agriculture-related programs.

Conditions of the internship program include:

- Each student having a portfolio for the summer that GROWMARK supports and is accountable for. The portfolio is a substantial project within the organization, reflecting the work of GROWMARK and the member co-operative. By having an approved portfolio it aims to ensure an active and engaged experience, rather than one that is task assisting in nature
- The day-to-day aspects of the portfolio project are overseen by the member co-operative that the student is working for
- Included in the program are three required visits to the GROWMARK head office in Bloomington.
 - First visit: interns are given an orientation to the GROWMARK co-operative system and to their summer internship program.
 - Second visit: interns meet with the senior management of GROWMARK and take of tour of some of the GROWMARK facilities
 - Third and final visit: Each interns each give a 15 minute presentation on their summer portfolio to members of the GROMWARK senior management team and sometime members of the board
- Some of the portfolios that have been held by Ontario interns include: developing a marketing strategy for Vineland Growers' Co-operative, a tender-fruit marketing co-operative in the Niagara region of Ontario. Another developed a strategy for the movement of agricultural products for the summer months (the busiest season of the year), for AGRIS Co-operative. AGRIS is an agriculture supply co-operative with 7 branches in the southern Ontario area.

Interns receive a competitive summer wage, with GROWMARK determining the baseline salary and contributing half of the summer wage per intern. The other half of the salary and any top-up is paid by the member co-operative, for a minimum of 12 weeks. Additionally GROWMARK covers the cost of all travel for the visits to Bloomington.

2.5 Alterna

The York and Ryerson Universities Streetcorner Strategy is a pilot program being offered by Alterna Savings credit union. Alterna Savings is the second largest credit union in Ontario with more than 120,000 members and more than \$2 billion in assets, the membership service area covers Ottawa and the greater Toronto area. The aim of this initiative is to attract young people, ages 18-24 to Alterna in an effort to build membership, increase Alterna brand awareness, increase sales and revenue and to expand Alterna's youth membership. For the first one-to-two weeks of the university school year Alterna will set-up and staff a booth at both the York University and Ryerson University, concentrating there efforts on raising awareness about Alterna and the products that are specifically available to students. Each student who opens an Alterna account during this time has their name entered into a draw for a \$1000 Alterna Investments Savings Account—one draw will be done at each location. For the campaign to take place at two locations, the budget is approximately \$8000.

2.6 Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto (CHFT)

Since 2004, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto CHFT has been supporting young people through their Diversity Scholarship Program. This program awards young people entering their first year of a post-secondary program with a scholarship that provides recipients with financial support through four years of post-secondary education. To be eligible for the scholarship, the young recipient must be living in a CHFT member housing co-operative and have demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity in their communities. CHFT is currently supporting 96 young people through this program, including mature students, and has awarded more than \$375,000 in scholarship funds.

In addition, CHFT has also developed the 'Success Becomes You' Scholarship, which is awarded to young people who demonstrate determination to succeed at the post-secondary level or in a skilled trade, who did not have the opportunity to finish high school due to family, financial or other circumstances.

For 2010, 23 scholarships will be awarded.

National association initiatives

The strategy for national associations to engage co-operative youth initiatives is similar to that of the provincial associations, the aim is to promote and develop the co-operative movement, and to support the overall sustainability of the sector. Overall, these initiatives tend to engage an older youth demographic, as most are involved through an employment or governance role in the sector.

2.7 CCA's National Youth Caucus

As a legacy initiative of the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA), the CCA established a National Youth Caucus, which is a committee of the board and had its inaugural meeting in February 2010. At this time the Youth Caucus is made up of 12 young people, the majority of whom are under the age of 25, and 1 CCA Board member, representing the diversity of the sector, in sector, geographic region, gender, etc. The Caucus has an 18-month mandate and in that time their objectives are to determine national youth engagement priorities and to determine an appropriate national youth structure that will help facilitate engagement and involvement. Some of the current priorities being explored include: the use of technology and social media; co-operative education and curriculum; collaboration with the CCCM Youth Delegation; resources that can help the sector to engage with young people; and an effective national co-operative youth caucus structure.

This initiative is still very much in its infancy, yet there are best practices to learn from others and best practices to share.

2.8 CCCM's Youth Delegation

Le Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM), established a youth delegation in 2007, of young co-operators between the ages of 18 and 35. The CCCM Youth Delegation structure has representatives from each province across Canada with a provincial conseil, as well as a few sector representatives from the CQCM in Quebec. Each representative is responsible for being the liaison between the co-operative youth network in their respective province or sector and the Youth Delegation. The delegation meets monthly, with 2-3 face-to-face meetings per year (travel is provided by their respective organizations). The Youth Delegation also

has an action plan with short, medium and long-term objectives, which they present to the CCCM Board of Directors for approval, and the President of the Youth Delegation sits on the CCCM board as a voting director.

2.9 National Young Leaders Committee

In May 2006, Credit Union Central of Canada developed a National Young Leaders Committee made up of young credit union professionals under the age of 40 across Canada. The group has the mandate to increase the capacity and mentoring opportunities for young credit union leaders, while assisting the credit union movement to develop strategies and to become a desired employer for young people with an interest in financial services. The development of this task force is seen as, "...something that cannot be done in isolation of other strategies being pursued, either by credit unions, or the credit union system as a whole. As one thinks through these realities, it becomes more obvious that regardless of size, developing young leaders is going to be important for the system for many years to come" (National Young Leaders Task Force, 2006, 7). To date the Young Leaders Committee has conducted some market research on the awareness and application of the co-operative principles amongst young credit union members; a central and national job search/job availability website has been created for employment positions at credit unions; and national mentorship program that matches senior credit union professionals with the young leaders.

Aspects of these initiatives could be considered for replication on a smaller scale and awareness of such initiatives can encourage participation.

3. Activities/Events

Within this category is a summary of the responses that were received for events and activities that take place within the co-operative sector, and are specifically designed to be gatherings that bring together large numbers of young people from across a region or the country, etc. or gatherings that take place within the sector. These are best practice examples of initiatives that are possible for large co-operatives/ credit unions or sector associations to undertake.

3.1 The Co-operators *IMPACT Program*

In September 2009, The Co-operators hosted its inaugural 4-day *IMPACT* Conference, at the University of Guelph in Ontario.

- 180 post-secondary students between the ages of 19 and 25 years
- Pan-Canadian representation
 - Participants were selected through a blind selection process and then confirmed using criteria that focused on achieving balanced and proportional representation from each of the provinces
- The Conference was primarily driven with a concentration on the theme of sustainability, while the explicit co-op connection was a little more tenuous. However, a number of the guest speakers were from the co-operative sector and spoke to business alternatives found in co-operatives and the social economy.
- All expenses for the Conference, including transportation was covered by The Co-operators
- Students were asked to do pre-and post work for the Conference and following the Conference
- Funds were made available through an application process to provide financial assistance toward specific sustainability initiatives that participants are involved in

Outside of the IMPACT Conference, The Co-operators has a long history of supporting young people. These involvements primarily happen with The Co-operators serving as a funder, supports that they provide include funding the provincial youth camp programs, and funding the co-operative studies centres at Canadian universities. Additionally, The Co-operators provides financial support through their co-operative development funding program, while there is no specific focus on applications from young people, they are welcome to apply.

3.2 North American Students of Co-operation (NASCO)

NASCO is a North American organization that supports student housing co-ops in Canada and the United States. Annually, NASCO organizes and hosts the Emerging Co-op Leaders program, in Washington D.C. which brings together a group of emerging leaders from all parts of the co-operative movement to learn about the breadth and depth of co-operatives and co-operation.

- One week program, held in conjunction with the annual NCBA conference
- Registration fee of \$495 CDN includes 3 nights of accommodations, 4 days of programming, most meals and a seat at NCBA's Co-op Hall of Fame Ceremony
 - many of the seats to the Hall of Fame Dinner are donated by co-operative organizations
- Open to all work-bound students over the age of 18, there is also no age limit on the program.
 - The average age of people who participate in this program is about 26 and annually 25-30 people participate.
- NASCO has a dedicated staff person who works with outside facilitators and NCBA to develop the program sessions.
- This program is operated with an \$11,200 budget that is supported through discounted rates by NCBA and sponsorships

At this time that program is still largely US-focused but there are usually a few Canadian participants each year but they are open to having more Canadian participants.

3.3 Conferences—non-youth specific i.e. ACE, CASC

There are a number of conferences that take place throughout each year within the co-operative, social economy and community economic development sector. Some conferences offer subsidized rates or scholarship to help young people attend. There is great variety in the types of conference available, from those put on by co-operatives, credit unions or provincial associations, to those hosted by CCA and CCCM with a national and multi-sectoral focus, to conferences hosted by universities with a more academic focus, such as the Centre for Co-operative Studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

Additionally there are a few organized groups and associations of professionals within the co-op sector who organize annual conferences:

- The annual Canadian Association for Studies on Co-operative (CASC) Conference. CASC is an organization of co-operative academics and practitioners focused on conducting and sharing co-operative research, and providing networking opportunities between academics, practitioners and young people interested in co-operative studies. This Conference is held every year in conjunction with the Canadian Humanities and Social Science Congress, which travels to a different Canadian university each year (end of May to early June). In 2011, this Conference will be at the University of New Brunswick.

- The Association of Co-operative Educators (ACE) is a group of co-op academics and practitioners from Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico who meet annually for the ACE Institute. The location of the Institute moves between these three countries.
- The Association of Co-operative Communicators, are people usually working with the co-operative sector with a communications role. The group is largely US-based and meets annually for a conference with a co-op communications focus.

4 Youth-directed initiatives

Four of the responses that were received related to co-operatives that young people have taken a lead role in establishing or in the operations. All receive supports, mainly through financial contributions, but the types and levels of involvement differ between initiatives.

4.1 The New Practice Facilitators Co-operative (TNP)

The New Practice is a relatively new co-operative based in Vancouver that was created to provide quality educational products to youth and adults on topics related to community and co-operative development. The co-operative is structured as a worker co-operative, with 5 members who went through or worked at The YES Camp together. TNP offers workshops to all age groups, but historically the primary audience has been to young people between 14 and 25. Presentations can be between 1 hour and 2 days in length depending upon the needs of the client.

TNP is supported by BCCA and operates on a very modest budget, this year the budget was \$2500. In previous years a \$7,000 grant was received from the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to support the development and delivery of workshops.

4.2 Advocate Youth Services Co-op—Baie Verte & Area Community Youth Network

The Advocate Youth Services Co-op is currently funded by the provincial government to provide youth oriented events to youth 12 to 18 years of age, including operates a drop-in youth centre, that is open six days per week for young people to have a place to go and things to do. At the youth centre there is internet access, video games, board games, air hockey and other such activities. Additionally the centre hosts teen dances, gym days, other recreational activities and opportunities for volunteering and community involvement in the area.

The co-operative is the first youth co-operative in Newfoundland. It was incorporated in April 2008 and is governed by a board of directors that is overseen by a youth steering committee, which approves all action items from the board.

Most of the young people to come to the centre are between 12 and 15 years of age, and there are approximately 30 young people who participate in the programs and services.

To carry out the programs and activities of the co-op and the centre there is one full-time staff person, and a network of 20-30 volunteers, with 4-5 participating in any given event. The government funds \$65,000 per year for overhead, rent and staffing. Other funds are acquired through other government sources or private donors, bringing the total annual operating budget to \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year. Also supporting the program and staff are the network of other community youth networks in the province, the schools in the region, the local Kinsmen and the local consumer co-operative.

4.3 CJS through CDEM (quasi self-directed)

The Coopérative jeunesse de service/Youth services co-operative (CJS) program has been hugely successful in Quebec and has been replicated by some of the francophone provincial associations in other provinces. In Manitoba, the CJS program has been operating for the past seven years. The objective of the program is to educate young people by supporting them with an alternative approach to starting a collective enterprise. With the help of facilitators (teachers, local co-ops, the coordinator with the co-operative association) young people from a high school or within a particular community will form a co-op, usually and unincorporated worker co-op, to provide services (painting, yard work, babysitting, etc.) The organizations usually operated during the summer, but it helps to have someone maintain the organization on a part-time basis for the remainder of the year. During the operating season the young people learn all of the steps needed to run a co-operative, from the recruitment of members to running effective board meetings, they have an opportunity to make money and actively learn about the co-operative model.

The great aspect of this program is that it can be run in any number of settings, from urban to rural and there can be a great variety in services provided. The program is applicable to high school and college/university aged students, however the average age of participants is 15-17.

The program has also seen great long-term impacts with young people seeing out opportunities to work with or develop co-operatives in the future.

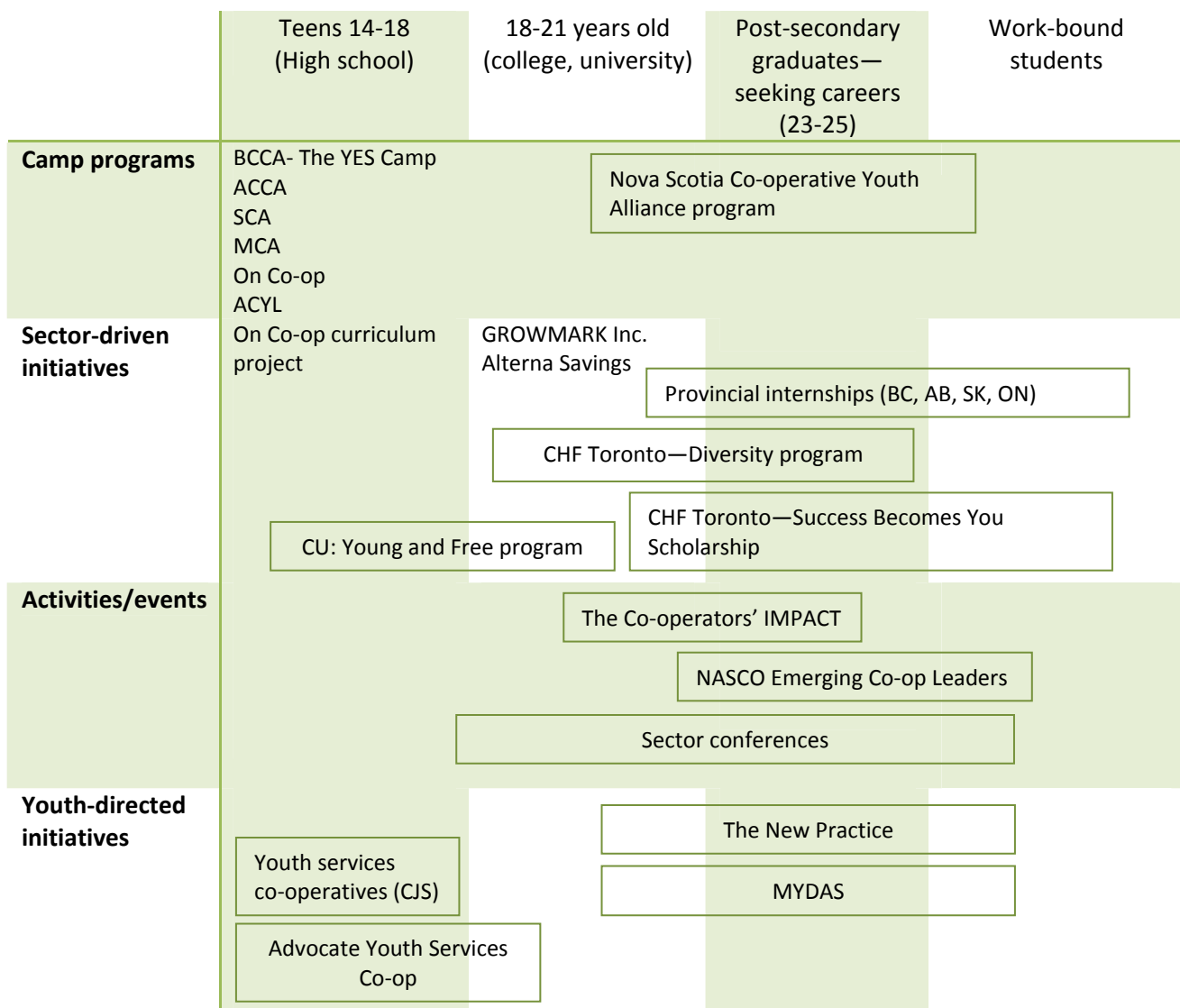
4.4 Mobilizing Youth to Deliver Advisory Services (MYDAS)

The objective of this program was to education and train some young people between the ages of 18 and 34 in co-operative and community economic development. Assisted by training and academic and personal interests, teams of 2-3 students worked in each province in Atlantic Canada. They traveled around their respective province for the summer and meeting with and providing advisory services to interested groups, in an effort to promote community prosperity and local self-reliance. The position was considered to be an internship and lasted for the summer months (May to August). The interns were paid a competitive wage and their travel costs were supported. Additionally there was an overall coordinator supporting the program. With each year the funding for the program was cut back, reducing the total number of interns who were able to be hired. The primary funder of the MYDAS initiative was the Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI) program and the agreement allowed the first summer to ran with the full group of interns and after that, the funding contribution decreased and the total number of participants continued to decrease. In 2007 there were no longer any funds to continue the program. There are lessons to be learned and options to explore from the model that was used to develop this program.

While there are not a lot of examples of youth developing co-operatives, this is certainly an area that could be further supported and developed in the future.

Map of co-operative youth programs across Canada

The chart below provides a visual representation of the information that was received about various co-operative youth programs across Canada. The chart plots the initiatives into the 4 areas of development (camp programs, sector-driven initiatives, activities/events, and self-directed initiatives) that were identified by the program information received. The chart also shows the target age group for which each of the respective programs is intended. Together the two axis of the chart show the mix of what is currently available to young people as well as gaps in co-operative youth programming in Canada.



Reflections/ Recommendations

Based on the information that was gathered there are 8 reflections/recommendations to share. These are not hard-and-fast recommendations but areas to consider, areas that can be discussed further and reflections on the information that was gathered.

1. The role of young people in co-operative governance.

A gap in the results has been identified, as the role of young people in co-operative governance, was not specifically highlighted, such as youth director positions, youth advisory groups, strategies for encouraging young people to run for a seat on a board of directors, etc. This is an extremely important area in which to consider active strategy development and it is recommended that this be explored for the development of the Newfoundland Labrador strategy. The importance and role of governance within the co-operative model is foundational, and supporting young people in developing their skills and competencies is critical.

2. Developing a holistic approach that provides a continuum of products and services.

The diversity of the size, sectors and roles within the co-operative sector is a unique and valuable feature. Therefore it is recommended that a strategy at a provincial level focus on making opportunities available to the full defined youth demographic, in this case 14 to 25 years of age. A provincial strategy should consider a continuum of products and services—NLFC does not have to develop and coordinate every initiative, some can be NLFC initiatives and for others could play a role in passing along information or providing secondary support to participation.

A continuum recognizes:

- People learn about and identify with the co-operative model at different ages and stages in their lives. A continuum allows for multiple points of entry.
- Not every young person is going to be interested in the same thing, some will be interested in governance, others academics, others development, etc. A continuum allows for increased diversity within the sector.

3. Developing partnership and collaborative relationships

This point is related to and complements having a continuum of services. Entering into strategic partnerships and collaborative relationships, allows for greater diversity of programs and services, because of the access to different expertise, interests, funding possibilities, etc. Some partnerships that NLFC may want to explore include:

- Increasing the active participation of co-ops and credit unions within the Newfoundland Labrador sector, this could allow for joint initiative;
- Partnering with community colleges or Memorial University;
- Exploring partnerships with the network of community youth centres, or area high schools

4. Having a dedicated staff person

The coordination of youth events, relationship building with young people and with stakeholders all takes time and requires on-going attention, therefore it is recommended that there be at least a dedicated staff resource to keep ideas, initiatives and tasks moving. The youth demographic is also largely transient, physically moving for employment or education, and as they age—moving from teens into their 20`s, their needs and interests change, a staff resource can help ensure that on-going contact is maintained.

5. Mixing up the best aspects of current programs

In reading through the various programs presented in this report, note the features and aspects of various programs that were described and consider what you feel to be the best aspects of each. As you move into considering opportunities for initiatives that could work best for the Newfoundland context consider combining some of these features. For example, there may be a possibility to combine an internship experience with a co-op business development experience, or to explore a multi-stake holder approach, where some services or experiences are through a worker experience, others a consumption experience.

This will be a key aspect shaping the discussion in August.

6. Meaningful involvement of young people

This can be best summarized as `walk the talk`. The success of many of the programs described in this report has come from organizations going beyond having things for young people to do, to engaging them in the process, assisting them to develop skills and competencies for them to take leadership roles, and creating spaces where young people can explore the co-operative model and how it applies to their reality. Using meaningful involvement as a key consideration when working on this strategy will only benefit the sustainability of these initiatives during the project and beyond the end of the funding agreement.

7. Barriers to be aware of in co-operative education

Having the co-operative model integrated into school curriculum at all levels, from primary through to post-secondary, has been a goal and an ambition of the sector for many years. Various initiatives have been tried and there are some academic centres of excellence at the university level. Some of the challenges to consider when exploring the integration of co-operative content into academic curriculum is:

- The provincial mandate of education makes national initiatives difficult and within provinces there tends to be differences in priorities and interest depending upon the school board or even a particular school. Therefore a personalized approach and one that cultivates champions over time may lead to the greatest success in integration
- Ensuring the co-operative curriculum is matched with the curriculum objectives of the Ministry of Education and the respective school boards. The curriculum needs to be accessible to teachers but there are need to be a strategy to educate teachers so that they feel more comfortable engaging the content. Having a specific teacher-education strategy could provide some leverage in this initiative.

8. Sustainability of initiatives

Developing a plan or strategy to ensure the sustainability of an initiative is a challenge that is not specific to youth initiatives but there are numerous examples of a project or organization not being able to continue once a primary funding source changes. Therefore proposed youth engagement strategies should include a sustainability plan, and reflect the thought and consideration for diversification of funding sources, partners, etc.

Without shaping the next aspects of this project too much, the six points listed above are intended to spark discussion and to assist the group in developing questions, thinking out features that lead to critical success factors and starting to consider what best practices can be used to develop the Newfoundland Labrador provincial co-operative youth engagement strategy.

By Tanya Gracie
Canadian Co-operative Association

Appendix A: NLFC Survey of Canadian Youth Programs

The Newfoundland-Labrador Federation of Co-operatives (NLFC) is working to develop and deliver a new and expanded co-operative youth services program. The target demographic for this project is young people ages 14 to 25, in Newfoundland and Labrador. Within this age group, NLFC has a particular interest in skills development programs for the 18 to 25 age group.

Prior to developing a strategy for young co-operators in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Federation is working with the Canadian Co-operative Association to conduct a scan and find out more information about existing programs and services available to young co-operators in Canada. Given the diversity of programs that are out there, an additional objective of this research is to identify areas where links can be made between initiatives. Everyone who completes the survey will be given a copy of the report summarizing the findings.

As you move through the survey please provide detail on up to 2 of your flagship or most successful programs/services for the 14 to 25 demographic. The survey is quite extensive and will take you approximately 35-40 minutes to complete. Alternatively, I am available to conduct the interview over the phone, so that you can provide a shorter description and direct me to other relevant resources (i.e. website).

To arrange an interview time, or to follow-up with any questions about this project or the survey, please contact Tanya Gracie, Program Officer, Member Services, by phone at 613.238.6711 ext 243 or by email at tanya.gracie@coopscanada.coop. I ask that we complete the surveys/interviews by Wednesday April 21, 2010.

Thank you for your contributions to this project,
Tanya

On behalf of the Newfoundland-Labrador Federation of Co-operatives, Co-operative Youth Strategy Program

We would like to know who is completing this survey.

Name:

Title:

Phone, email:

Organization:

City/Town:

Province:

Please fill out the sections below for each program associated with your organization that serves a youth demographic between the ages of 14 and 25.

Program Overview

1. Name of the program:
2. Please provide a brief description of the program (3-5 sentences):
3. Please describe the features/ links between this program and the co-operative model (3-5 sentences):

4. What is your relationship with the program (please select all boxes that are relevant to you):
- Administrator
 - Advisory
 - Core program/ service of your organization
 - Facilitator
 - Sponsor
 - Supporter
 - Other, please describe:
5. Objectives of the program (please select all of the boxes that are relevant to you):
- Education
 - Employment
 - Governance
 - Job creation/ internship
 - Skill building
 - Other, please describe:
6. Location of the program (please select all of the boxes that are relevant to you):
- Urban setting
 - Rural setting
 - At a school facility
 - At a camp facility
 - In a community setting
 - At your organization
 - Other, please describe:
7. Target demographic of the program:
- Teens—14 to 18
 - Post secondary school students—18 to 21 (college, university)
 - Work-bound students 18+
 - New employee development
 - Internship 18-25,
please specify if a post-secondary degree is required for internship eligibility
 - Youth board directors 18+
Maximum age for youth director eligibility
Voting or non-voting position
 - Other, please describe:
8. Duration of the program (please select the box that is most relevant to you):
- Half day
 - Full day
 - 2-3 days
 - One week
 - Two weeks
 - A term/semester
 - 6 months
 - Full year
 - Other, please describe:

9. How many times is this program offered per year? (please select the box that is most relevant to you):
 - Monthly
 - Bi-annually
 - Annually
 - Upon appointment/ request
 - Other, please describe:

10. How long has this program been running for?
 - Pilot
 - 1-3 years
 - 4-7 years
 - 8-10 years
 - more than 10 years

11. What is the average age of a program participant?

12. On average how many young people participate in this program?

13. Is there a participant fee for this program? If so, how much is it?

14. Please describe the average participant in this program.

Program Administration

1. Who is responsible for the development of this program? (please select the box that is most relevant)
 - Dedicated staff person at our organization
 - Advisory committee
 - An outside organization, we just administer the program
 - In partnership with another organizations
 - Other, please describe:

2. Is your organization responsible for program administration? If yes, please select all of the tasks that are relevant to you)
 - Registration
 - Marketing
 - Putting together program materials
 - Arranging sponsorship
 - Coordinating volunteers
 - Maintaining site logistics
 - Other, please describe:

3. How is the program delivered? (please select all boxes that are relevant to you):
 - Volunteers
 - Program coordinator
 - Paid staff
 - Outside facilitators

Teachers or professors
Community leaders
Members of the local co-operative and credit union community
Other, please describe:

4. How many people are required to carry out this program?
5. What is the total budget for this program?
6. Please provide a rough breakdown of the program budget.
What is the cost per participant?
7. Is outside funding required to operate this program? If so, what are the sources of this funding?
8. What is the amount of time required to prepare for this program?
9. What is the promotion for the program? How do you reach your target market?
Brochure or poster
Newsletter or e-newsletter
Work of mouth
Information sessions
Postings
Website
Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
Word of mouth
Alumni groups
Other, please describe:
10. Are there any partners in the development or delivery of this program? If yes, please list them.
11. Do co-operatives participate in the support of this program?
Through staff time
Volunteer time
Financial sponsorship
Mentoring
Program development
Other, please describe:
12. Post program, do you remain in contact with program participants? If so in what ways?

Making Links

1. Do you ever have program participants who are outside of the province or regional/community delivery area participate in this program? If so, please describe how this relationship works
2. Would you be interested in exploring ways that young people from other regions, or provinces could participate in this program or service?

Reference

Do you know of another youth program that we be beneficial for us to contact:

Name

Organization

Phone, email

Any additional comments that you would like to share:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.