

Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation/ Fédération canadienne des coopératives de travail

Annual Report | 2015



CWCF-CoopZone Conference 2014, in Wolfville, Nova Scotia



CANADIAN WORKER
CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION

www.canadianworker.coop/

Profile of the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation (“CWCF”)

CWCF is the apex organization for worker co-ops in Canada. It was established in 1991. Offices are located in Calgary, AB, the Annapolis Valley, NS and in Winnipeg, MB. CWCF has a staff of four permanent employees (one full-time in Calgary, two part-time in Nova Scotia, one part-time in Winnipeg). It also temporarily has a part-time staff member in Montreal. Its Board of seven directors provides stewardship. There are two “at large” director positions and representatives for each of the following regions: BC, Prairies, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

Vision Statement

To be a growing, cohesive network of democratically controlled worker co-ops that provide a high quality of work life and support the development of healthy and sustainable local economies, based on co-operative principles.

Mission Statement

1. Strengthen our worker co-ops.
2. Support the development of new worker co-ops.
3. Represent the Canadian worker co-op movement in Canada & internationally.
4. Strengthen the Federation.

Membership

CWCF has 51 direct worker co-op members and many more worker co-ops affiliated as indirect members, through the Quebec Regional Federation members, *Le Réseau de la coopération du travail du Québec*, *la Fédération québécoise des coopératives forestières*, and *la Fédération des coopératives des paramédics du Québec*.

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[Note: in the electronic version of this document, the underlined blue text leads to hyper-links.]

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President's Report / Rapport de la Présidence 2015¹

Le français suit, à la page 3.

The Board of Directors has continued working with our staff on the two major missions of our Federation: empowering our member co-ops and developing new worker co-ops.

Relative to **our first mission, empowering our member co-operatives**, we have had three main projects.

Project # 1: *The Co-operative Development Fund, now called the "Canadian Co-operative Investment Fund"*. Our Federation has played a leadership role with Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada ("CMC"), in advocating for this Fund, most notably through the indispensable expertise of our former Financial Officer, Peter Hough, who continues to work with us on this project. Thank you so much, Peter! And we have received great news about it. The co-operative movement is ready. The co-operative movement, including CWCF with a small investment, has committed itself to invest close to 25 million dollars in the Fund, and the Fund committee is in the process of legally establishing the Fund, to be completed in the coming months. We had little hope with the former federal government, but with the new government who already has a good awareness of co-op questions, there is a good possibility of additional government investments.

Project # 2: *A Canadian grant program for co-operative development*. Here again, the previous government was giving us little hope. The arrival of the new government finally gives us hope of reinstating a grant program for co-operative development, something like the former Co-operative Development Initiative ("CDI").

Project # 3: *Legislative framework supporting the development of worker co-operatives*. As you know, worker co-operatives, with very few exceptions are governed by provincial laws. The CWCF works primarily at the federal level. However, we have influence, most notably through CMC. As you also know, everywhere on the planet in countries where the co-operative movement is well developed, a rather complete legislative framework exists to foster the emergence and development of co-operatives. At the heart of these legislative frameworks lies the translation into law of the principle of indivisibility of reserves. During the past three years, we have initiated within our Federation a great debate on this subject, which has brought about an incentive rather than mandatory approach. We have now moved this debate to the CMC. Quietly, the thought process on this principle, which I personally consider to be the hinge on which all other co-operative principles rest, is making its way throughout the worker co-op sector across Canada. We are continuing to pursue this discussion. This is important since the indivisibility of reserves, which is already in place in Quebec, is one of the most powerful arguments in favor of state intervention in co-operative

¹ We regret that we do not have the full Annual Report in French, but we're pleased to have the President's report in both languages. / Nous regrettons de ne pas avoir tout le Rapport annuel français, mais nous sommes heureux d'avoir le rapport de la présidence dans les deux langues.

development because the state will then know that the money it invests in co-operatives will serve the common good.

Relative to **our second mission, developing new worker co-ops**, we have continued to work on the two main existing projects, the creation of start-up worker co-ops and the transfer of businesses to the worker co-op form.

Project # 4: *Creating worker co-ops as new start-ups*. Our involvement on this project is two-tiered: collaborating with the CoopZone developers' network and financing start-ups. Our Executive Director will tell you more about CoopZone. On the financing side, this meshes in with Project # 1 and Project # 2 above, the Canadian Co-operative Investment Fund (CCIF) and a new CDI-type granting program. I am optimistic about both.

Project # 5: *Transfer of businesses to their workers as worker co-ops*. We have been very active on this front this year, on two levels : on the one hand, advocating for a favorable policy environment with an appropriate legal framework and a just as appropriate government funding program, and on the other hand, handing our experts' network the tools they need to properly accompany employee projects aimed at buying the business they work for.

At the first level, we have assembled the best experts in our network on this issue within a special CWCF committee. I wish to thank them all, by the way, for their invaluable volunteer work. This committee has helped us to write up the concept of a “favorable” government program. We have succeeded, in collaboration with other CMC members, in making CMC aware of the issue, to such an extent that CMC has now created its own committee on the subject, whose mandate it is to submit to the Board of Directors of CMC a specific government program and to define CMC's role on this issue.

At the second level, we have signed a historic agreement with France's CGSCOP, which is considered to be the leading world expert on this issue. They co-ordinate approximately 50 transfers of businesses to worker co-ops each year. This affects thousands of jobs which are maintained. We have signed the agreement on October 28th. As a first step, this agreement will allow us access to all their tools, and in a second phase, to train our business transfer agents together.

There you have it. As you can see, the Federation has not been idle during the past year. We are still a small organization, but we manage to exercise real leadership in worker co-operative development. We now know that the efforts we have deployed during the past few years have not been in vain. We will start to see concrete results shortly.

In conclusion, I wish to express my warmest thanks to the two teams who make up the engine of this forward-looking Federation: my colleagues at the Board of Directors who have showed yet again this year the magnitude of their volunteer commitment, and our small team of employees who, I must say, have shown just as much commitment – we could call them volunteers as well since we ask so much of them.

Thank you!, Alain Bridault

****Le français****

Rapport de la Présidence

Le CA a continué à travailler avec l'équipe de la permanence sur les deux grandes missions de notre fédération : l'empowerment de nos coopératives membres et le développement de nouvelles coopératives de travail.

Sur **la première mission, l'empowerment de nos coopératives membres**, nous avons trois principaux chantiers.

Chantier 1 : Le Fonds de développement coopératif, appelé maintenant le

« Fonds canadien d'investissement coopératif ». Notre fédération a joué un rôle de leadership dans la création de ce Fonds avec Coopératives et mutuelles Canada (« CMC »), notamment grâce à l'expertise incontournable de notre ancien directeur financier, Peter Hough, qui continue à travailler avec nous sur ce chantier. Un grand merci, Peter ! Et les nouvelles sont très bonnes à ce sujet. Le mouvement coopératif est prêt. Le mouvement coopératif, y compris la FCCT avec un petit investissement, s'est engagé à investir presque 25 million \$ dans le Fonds, alors le comité est en train de lancer le Fonds, ce qui devrait être fait dans les prochains mois. Nous attendions l'ancien gouvernement sans grand espoir, mais avec ce nouveau gouvernement déjà très sensibilisé aux enjeux coopératifs, il y a une bonne possibilité que le Fonds aura un investissement additionnel du gouvernement fédéral.



Alain Bridault-Président

Chantier 2 : Un programme canadien de subventions au développement coopératif. Là aussi nous avons peu d'espoir avec l'ancien gouvernement. L'arrivée de ce nouveau gouvernement nous donne enfin bon espoir de réobtenir un tel programme de subventions au développement coopératif comme l'était le programme Initiative de développement coopératif (« IDC »).

Chantier 3 : Des cadres législatifs favorables au développement des CT. Vous le savez, à part deux ou trois, vos coopératives sont régies par des lois provinciales, or nous oeuvrons au niveau fédéral. Mais nous avons un pouvoir d'influence, notamment via CMC. Comme vous le savez également, partout sur la planète, dans les pays où les CT sont bien développés, il existe un cadre législatif assez complet favorisant leur émergence et leur développement. Au cœur de ces cadres législatifs se trouvent la mise en force de loi de l'impartageabilité de la réserve. Durant les trois dernières années nous avons lancé un grand débat sur ce sujet à l'intérieur de notre fédération qui a donné pour résultat une approche incitative plutôt que coercitive. Nous avons maintenant transporté ce débat au sein de CMC. Tranquillement le processus de réflexion sur ce principe, que je considère personnellement comme la clef de voute des principes de la coopération, chemine au sein du secteur coopératif du travail à travers le Canada. Nous poursuivons la discussion. Cela est important car l'impartageabilité de la réserve, qui est déjà en place au Québec, est un des grands arguments favorisant l'intervention de l'État dans le développement coopératif, car il sait alors que l'argent investi servira le bien commun.

Sur la **seconde mission, le développement de nouvelles coopératives de travail**, nous avons continué à travaillé sur les deux grands chantiers déjà mis en œuvre, soit sur la création ce CT *ex nihilo* et sur la transmission d'entreprises.

Chantier 4 : la création de CT *ex nihilo*. Notre intervention sur ce chantier se fait sur deux plans : la collaboration avec réseau de développeurs CoopZone et le financement du démarrage. Sur CoopZone notre DG vous en dira plus. Sur la question du financement cela se combine avec les chantiers 1 et 2, le Fonds canadien d'investissement coopératif et un nouveau programme subventionnaire de type IDC. Je suis optimiste sur les deux.

Chantier 5 : la transmission d'entreprises à des CT. Nous avons été très actifs sur ce chantier cette année, en travaillant sur deux plans : d'une part créer un environnement politique favorable avec un cadre législatif approprié et un programme d'intervention gouvernemental tout aussi approprié et, d'autre part, outiller notre réseau d'experts pour qu'il soit en mesure de bien accompagner des projets de rachat d'entreprises par leurs employés.

Sur le premier plan, un comité spécial de la FCCT est en place qui réunit les meilleurs experts de notre réseau sur cette question. Je tiens d'ailleurs à les remercier tous et toutes pour leur travail bénévole qui nous fut très précieux. Ce comité nous a aidés à formuler le concept d'un programme gouvernemental favorable. Nous avons réussi, en collaboration avec d'autres membres de CMC, à sensibiliser CMC sur cette question au point qu'il a mis en place son propre comité de travail sur le sujet qui a pour mandat de proposer au CA de CMC un programme gouvernemental *ad hoc* et de définir le rôle qu'aura à jouer CMC sur cette question.

Sur le deuxième plan, nous avons conclu une entente historique avec la CGSCOP en France qui est considérée comme la plus experte au monde sur cette question. Ils coordonnent en effet chaque année environ 50 transmissions d'entreprises à leurs employés. Cela concerne des milliers d'emplois protégés. Nous avons signé cette entente le 28 octobre. Elle nous permettra dans un premier temps d'avoir accès à tous leurs outils de travail et dans un deuxième temps de former ensemble nos équipes d'agents de transmission.

Voilà, comme vous le constatez la fédération n'a pas chômé cette dernière année. Nous sommes encore une petite organisation mais nous réussissons à exercer un réel leadership dans le développement coopératif. Nous savons maintenant que les efforts des dernières années n'ont pas été vains. Nous en verrons bientôt les résultats concrets.

En terminant, je tiens à remercier chaleureusement les deux équipes qui animent cette fédération porteuse d'avenir. Mes collègues au conseil d'administration qui ont montré encore cette année l'ampleur de leur engagement bénévole et notre petite équipe d'employés qui je dois dire a montré tout autant d'engagement, qu'on peut même dire bénévole tant on leur en demande.

Merci !

Alain Bridault

2014-2015 Executive Director's Report

Operations

In 2014-15, the CWCF was able to maintain staff and operations that support the achievement of our strategic objectives. This is due to the ongoing commitment of members, directors, developers and staff to the cause and the principles of workplace democracy and co-operation for which the CWCF stands. CWCF now has 51 worker co-op members, approximately 60 worker co-op developer members (through CoopZone), 4 regular associate members, 69 RRSP-associate members (which join to have access to our RRSP program,



Hazel Corcoran-Executive Director

e.g., co-ops other than worker co-ops), and 4 regional federation members, the list of which can be found on our web site or by asking staff for a member list. We have built a dynamic, networked infrastructure that provides supports to existing worker co-operatives and to co-operatives in development, despite our relatively small financial resources.

Over the years, worker co-op member dues to CWCF have been on the increase, e.g. from \$10,770 in 2005 to \$18,482 in 2015. (Our worker co-op member dues rate has never been increased since our founding; it is 3/20ths of 1% of payroll. Thus the increases represent growth in number of members and/or growth in payroll of existing members.) Unfortunately in the last year, the worker co-op member dues decreased for the second year in a row, this time by \$3,664 (from \$22,146 to \$18,482), which is largely due to the loss of two large members, one of which decided to not be a worker co-operative. Fortunately, the overall dues dropped by a smaller amount, due to an increase in dues from regional federation members whose dues rate increased, and dues from associate members whose ranks have been growing along with our RRSP program.

The long-term sustainability and growth of the CWCF remains somewhat challenging. The cancellation of the federal Co-operative Development Initiative in 2012 effectively removed about 25% of the CWCF's overall revenues (in the prior full year of the program, over \$76,000). The success of CWCF remains dependent on significant volunteer contributions made by individuals, including Board members and staff. Achieving the potential that exists for promoting and growing the worker co-op movement to benefit Canadians remains the primary concern for the CWCF Board and staff.



**José Orbaiceta, Argentina - 2014
Keynote Speaker**

The year ended August 2015 was another important and successful one for CWCF, although there were some significant challenges. CWCF's varied revenue streams including the fast-growing RRSP program (43% of revenues), the member dues (representing about 10 % of revenues), the annual Loyalty Payment from The Co-operators (variable, and nearly 20% of revenues last year), occasional fee-for-service contracts, and other revenue streams have enabled us to provide services to members. The CWCF (excluding Fund Operations) had an operating surplus of \$17,015 (compared to a deficit of \$4,819 in 2014), on total revenue of \$261,011, up from \$214,611 at year-end 2014 (the increase being primarily due to

the Loyalty Payment). The Fund had total revenue of \$16,636 and a deficit from operations for the year of (\$317), before taking a recovery of \$1,667 on the write-down provision. The combined operating results for CWCF show an operating surplus of \$18,365. The general reserve of the CWCF as at August 31, 2015 was \$667,633; the majority is in the Tenacity Works Fund. The non-Fund (CWCF) general reserve is \$153,300. Looking forward, our projections show that CWCF need not cut back on services provided to members in the coming year, in part through running a planned, managed deficit.

CWCF may not (yet) have the material resources to be the vehicle for transformative workplace democracy that we aspire to be, but we have accomplished significant amounts with what we have. If CWCF is to become the engine for growth that is needed in our current economic environment we need to continue to stretch our resources, and to find additional resources.

The Legacy of Mark Goldblatt (1952-2015)

All who knew him were greatly saddened when CWCF's President of 14 years (until 2007) and committed co-operator, Mark Goldblatt, died suddenly of a heart attack on February 3, 2015. Mark was a co-operative visionary, and dedicated his considerable talents and his ethic of service to growing and building various parts of the co-operative movement in Canada, from housing co-ops to funeral co-ops and of course, worker co-ops. CWCF supported his nomination for the first CMC Achievement Award, which he received posthumously in June at the Congress of Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada. CWCF has also named our own Merit Award for him.



I believe that the reason Mark felt so passionate about co-operatives is that he wanted to help bring power to the powerless. He believed strongly that basing the economy on democracy was the best way to empower people. His wife, Linda O'Neill, wrote in an obituary in the Globe and Mail,

"In Mark's testament accompanying his will, he thanked the co-op movement for giving direction and purpose to his life. Many people, he noted, want to leave the world better than they found it, but he was more ambitious. 'I wanted to create that better world on a sustainable basis,' he wrote. 'I don't think there is any future unless we build institutions of mutual assistance to guide and unite us in our day-to-day lives. Co-operatives are better than any institution I know to get this job done.'"

The spirit of Mark Goldblatt, through the many organizations he has inspired, led and passed through, lives on.

Worker Co-operatives for Societal Transformation

The worker co-operative is a model that has transformed people's lives. There are still too many people across Canada who are struggling to thrive and even survive that we haven't yet been able to reach. The dominant economic model continues to transfer wealth from the 99% to the 1%. Further, we know this model is threatening the planet. In July 2015, CWCF adopted a **Climate Change Statement**, in the lead-up to the Paris UN Conference which we have shared with the federal government. You can read it [here](#)². In the Statement, CWCF calls for an agreement in Paris that includes Commitment to 100% renewable future by 2050, Mutual Support, Equity and self-responsibility, Fair Compensation, and the Common Good. CWCF encourages its members and partners to adopt a similar statement.

I would like to invite and encourage all worker co-operators in Canada to join with CWCF in working to grow the worker co-op movement as a vehicle for social transformation. We invite you as well to attend our 25th anniversary Conference in Vancouver, November 3 – 5, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Hazel Corcoran, Executive Director

Financial Snapshot

Statement of Financial Position

<i>Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation Year Ended August 31, 2015</i>		
Assets		
	Current	\$ 543,613
	Long-term	\$ 1,464,379
Total Assets		\$ 1,464,379
Liabilities		
	Current	\$ 18,764
	Trust Funds Payable	\$ 777,982
Total liabilities		\$ 796,746
Members Equity		\$ 667,633
Total Liabilities and Member Equity		\$ 1,464,379

² <http://canadianworker.coop/cwcf-adopts-climate-change-statement-in-the-lead-up-to-the-un-climate-conference-in-paris-late-2015/>

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation	
Year Ended Aug 31, 2015	
Total Revenues	\$ 277,647
Total Expenses	\$ 260,949
Net Income (Loss)	\$ 18,365

Adoption of Strategic Plan

In November 2014, the CWCF membership adopted a new 3-year Strategic Plan proposed by the Board and staff.

In our Strategic Plan, the vision of CWCF is: **To be a growing, cohesive network of democratically controlled worker co-ops that provide a high quality of work life and support the development of healthy and sustainable local economies, based on co-operative principles.**

The 4-part mission of CWCF is to:

- (1) strengthen our worker co-ops,**
- (2) support the development of new worker co-ops,**
- (3) represent the Canadian worker co-op movement in Canada and internationally, and**
- (3) strengthen the Federation.**

All of our goals and activities are aligned within this new Strategic Plan, and many of the goals and activities cover more than one part of the mission.

Co-operative Development

A core activity of CWCF has been the delivery of co-operative development services to worker co-operatives. From 2003 through 2012, this work was supported through the CDI-Advisory Services program. The CDI funding ended on December 31, 2012. Shortly afterward, the CWCF Board approved a commitment from CWCF's own resources for a new Technical Assistance Program for the following three years, starting in



2013-2014. The grants are targeted at CWCF's members, who may receive an initial grant of \$500 to assess a particular issue within the co-op, and then a potential follow-up grant of an additional \$500 which must be matched by the co-operative. Information on this Technical Assistance Program is available [here](#). Grants provided in the last year include support to business planning to the Grain Exchange Worker Co-operative Bakery in

Calgary (which seeks to replicate the very successful Arizmendi Bakery Co-ops in the San Francisco Bay Area), and marketing research for Natural Cycle Courier Worker Co-op in Winnipeg.

Member Engagement

Instead of a member survey this year, we launched the listservs based on last year's member survey interest as well as a worker co-op road tour.

CWCF Listservs

Five listservs were launched in late 2014:

- Member development/engagement (Member-dev@canadianworker.coop)
- Marketing (marketing@canadianworker.coop)
- Financial (financial@canadianworker.coop)
- General (general@canadianworker.coop)
- Manager's/coordinators' network (general@canadianworker.coop)



The member engagement listserv plan was designed to engage members by sharing successful strategies and to launch the use of our listserv which members expressed an interest in but have not used. It was hoped that these discussions would help get members more connected to each other.

A series of four questions focused on two key areas were developed. Questions were launched about a week apart.

It appears that the listserv tool is not one that has gained much attention from our members. Although members were eager to join the listserv, they did not respond to this type of engagement. It was not clear why members didn't engage in this listserv campaign. If members have any suggestions about use of such listservs, please share them with Kaye Grant, communications@canadianworker.coop.

Road Tour

The staff and board determined that face-to-face conversations might prove to be a better way to engage our members. Given that our Technical Assistance granting program was also not getting the uptake we had planned it was decided to utilize some of this budget to conduct member tours across the country. We also saw this as an opportunity to connect with other worker co-operatives, some that were new start-up but not yet members, some that had been members but ceased or others that have not yet engaged with CWCF.

Toronto: Meet-and-Greet Event, April 13, 2015

A "Happy Hour" type of meet-and-greet was held in Toronto, hosted at Urbane Worker Co-op. There were about 20 people attending including the full Board of CWCF, and staff, Hazel and Kaye. Attendance included:

members of Come as you Are, The Big Carrot, West End Food Co-op, Urbane, Send It Courier, Red2i, TWB Brewpub, as well as some other guests, two of whom are involved with a health food store that is considering succession to a worker co-operative.

Thanks to Urbane for hosting and to TWB Brewpub for the beer.

Ottawa: Meet-&-Greet / meeting, 21 April 2015:

The session was held at the West End Well Co-op, a multi-stakeholder co-op. This was hosted by Hazel and Yuill with assistance by Kelly Storie of La Siembra which was greatly appreciated. There were about 15 people present, representing the following co-ops:

- La Siembra, Ottawa
- Brierwood Design, Ottawa
- Turkey Flats Organic Co-op, Smiths Falls
- Studio Coloc, Gatineau
- Sustainability Solutions Group
- Also past Board member Colin MacDougall and past La Siembra member Jason Sooch attended (both of whom work for the Agency for Co-operative Housing, an Associate Member of CWCF).

In addition, Hazel met individually with La Siembra, Brierwood and EnerGreen – with two members who were in Ottawa for other meetings.

Kaye, Jamie and Eric who were in Ottawa as part of the CASC conference on June 2 to 5, 2015 had a meeting with Hugh Nelson the Executive Director of Y’s Owl Maclure Cooperative Centre and Kaye also connected with Hannah Renglich with the Local Organic Food Co-ops Network.

Saskatoon

In June 2015 Hazel was in Saskatoon for the CMC Congress and had the chance to meet with Unite Digital Marketing and Hullabaloo Publishing/Prairie dog.



Hazel also spoke with a food security group called CHEP which is supporting social enterprise development, including various types of urban agriculture and a café to employ marginalized youth.

Golden Horseshoe Region of Ontario

Kaye and Reba did a three-day tour in early July that included visits to worker co-ops in the area including Toronto, Hamilton, London, Stratford, Guelph and Durham (Kaye only).

They connected with the following Co-ops:



- Agricultural Renewal Co-operative (Durham)
- Planet Bean (Guelph)
- THAAT (Hamilton)
- *Sky Dragon Community Development Co-operative (Hamilton). Indicated an interest in joining.
- London Brewery (London.) Recent new member
- *On the Move Organics (London)
- Moss Digital - Phillip Glennie (London). Recent new member
- *Forest City Worker Co-op (London)
- Your Local Market (Stratford). Recent new member
- *To Bean or Not to Bean Coffee Roasting Co-op (Stratford)
- Catalyst Centre (Toronto). Recently renewed membership
- The Fourth Pig (Toronto)

Note that those with an * are not members of CWCF.

Vancouver

Stephen and Hazel met with the *Wood Shop Co-op, Incipe, and also a social enterprise group,* Groundswell Grassroots Economic Alternatives which has helped to develop some worker co-ops.

Other Worker Co-ops that Hazel visited include:

- Left-hand Media Co-op, Burnaby (done by phone)
- Sustainability Solutions Group (members in Vancouver)
- Vancouver Renewable Energy Co-op
- Devco
- *Glorious Organics
- *Haste workers' Co-op
- *Victory Gardens

Note that those with an * are not members of CWCF.

Maritimes

In late July, Hazel had the opportunity to visit co-ops in the Maritimes. She and Eric met with Aster Group,*Open Sky, Just Us, *Careforce and *Hands-on Co-op. In addition Hazel was also able to meet with more members from Energreen, and she and Eric met with Wendy Keats from CEC-NB and Leo LeBlanc, who recently joined CoopZone.



Outcomes

It was exciting and informative to have the opportunity to connect with worker co-operatives across the country. The only disappointment was not being able to visit all of our members. However, this does not preclude us from visiting these other members in future. If your co-op is interested in connecting with us, please let us know.

Here is a summary of some of the ideas and feedback that was received;

- Past participants at the CWCF Conferences stated that the Conferences are great venues for learning & networking with other worker co-op people.
- The co-ops in Vancouver were excited about the Conference (25th anniversary) being in Vancouver next year. Most of the worker co-operatives in Vancouver are planning to attend. For this Conference, it was suggested that we invite all who have ever been involved in CWCF, and write a booklet on CWCF history.
- Some members may have interest in repeating the Co-op Index.
- Some key worker co-op challenges include financing, investment share structuring and membership retention/attraction (turnover). Other challenges are succession planning, retirement planning, and finding work in the off-season.
- Members want more information about CWCF benefits and more details about our Co-operators insurance/benefit programs.
- CWCF should host a worker co-operative boot camp lead by experienced developers.
- Look at a directory with an eye to sales, or consider the possibility of having members who can sell to each other over distance or present what their co-op does.
- CRA and other parts of the federal government do not understand what a WC is. CWCF should try to help with this.
- CWCF should lobby to reinstate a program like the CDI.
- Topics of interest for tele-learning sessions, conference workshops etc. include:
 - “Ask a lawyer” session and similarly on financing.
 - Worker Coop basics training
 - Marketing / finding more paid work
 - How to promote having local governments work more with co-ops
 - Marketing especially around the word “co-op
 - Bringing in new members
 - Issues around HR in general – evaluations; a workbook on HR procedures
 - Policies for allocation of work
 - Business planning in a going worker co-op, to enable taking on more work in the off-season
 - Have an inspiring speaker at Conferences from the international scene.

Communication

The new CWCF website was launched in late April 2015. This has received enthusiastic reviews by both members and others. As part of this new communications revamp, CWCF underwent a rebranding with a new logo and colours being developed. This rebranding and website development was made possible by a grant from ACCA (Alberta community and Co-operative Association) which enabled us to hire an Intern, Jess Noriega-Lessard. She did a great job of designing our new logo and website.



We have changed our newsletter frequency from monthly to bi-monthly; however, we continue to publish special newsletters in order to keep our members informed of special events or CWCF news as needed. Visit our website [here](#) to access all of our newsletters. If you are not currently receiving our newsletter you may

visit this [link](#) and sign up. Remember that this is a two step process. Once you have signed up you must also verify your email by clicking on a special email link sent by the system.

Our new [facebook](#) page continues to attract good traffic. We also have a twitter account.

Kaye Grant is participating with CICOPA's working group of Communicators which meets on-line or by skype quarterly in order to discuss topics of interest internationally. Much of the work is focused on determining content for CCIOPA's [Working Together e-newsletter](#).

CoopZone Developers' Network



CWCF administers the CoopZone Developers' Network Co-operative, a network of individuals and organizations involved in co-op development in all sectors. Hazel Corcoran is the Executive Director of CoopZone. The CoopZone Developers' Network completed its 4th year of an on-line training program on co-operative development in June 2015. The training program is not running this year due to lack of a critical mass of students. However, course revisions which were recommended in an evaluation last year are being made by the new Course Director. CoopZone Course Director Peter Hough retired at the end of the 4th year, and a new Course Director, Eric Tusz-King, has been retained. This year marks the third year of the full participation in CoopZone by the new Legal Network, made up of lawyers and legal professionals working with or interested in co-operatives. A list of members and legal resources about co-ops are available on the CoopZone site, under the Legal Network tab. For more about CoopZone, see: www.coopzone.coop

Membership in Related Associations

The CWCF actively supports the worker co-op sector by building bridges to, and participating in, other key partner organizations.

- National:** CWCF is a member of Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada (CMC), the national, bilingual organization for all co-operative sectors which was launched approximately two years ago, as a result of the effective merger of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and *le Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM)*. Hazel Corcoran has served on the Board of CMC, first as an appointee and then having been elected in June, 2014 at the Moncton AGM of CMC. In its first year, she was Chair of the Governance Committee, and since June 2014 she has been Vice President. She is also a member of the Governance Committees, and the Government Affairs Committee. Yuill Herbert is CWCF's delegate to CMC, and Peter Hough is on the CMC's Canadian Co-op Investment Fund Committee. CMC's June, 2016 AGM will take place in Winnipeg.
- International:** CWCF is a member of [CICOPA](#), the international organization of worker co-ops. Alain Bridault is in his fourth year as member of the Executive Committee of CICOPA.



- **CICOPA-AMERICAS:** CWCF is also a member of CICOPA-Americas region and the North America sub-region. At both levels, the purpose is to exchange information about the worker co-op sector, associate federations across borders and plan government relations positions. Yuill Herbert and Hazel Corcoran are on the steering committee of the Americas region and the North America sub-region, and Yuill is the facilitator of the North America sub-region. The CICOPA-Americas region held its second Conference in Cartagena, Colombia, in the first week of November, 2014, and its third meeting in Panama in mid-September, 2015. In each case, CWCF was unable to attend but gave its proxy to the US FWC representative who participated.

Regional Connections

CWCF continues to stay in touch with worker co-op development in all regions of the country, continuing our active relationship with the worker co-op federations in Quebec,



where *le Réseau de la coopération du travail*, the Quebec Forestry Co-op Federation and Quebec Paramedic Co-op Federation are regional federation members. The Ontario Worker Co-op Federation is also a regional federation member, but it is inactive. CWCF is a member of all of the Anglophone Provincial Co-op Associations which it is eligible to join – all except Newfoundland. We also have

an active relationship with some of the francophone provincial organizations, such as *Le Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta*. In Quebec, all three of the worker co-op federations are members of *Le Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité ("CQCM")*, and are represented on the CQCM Board by Alain Bridault (le RESEAU), Jocelyn Lessard (Forestry Co-op Federation), and Alain Gaudreau (Paramedic Co-op Federation).

At the International Worker Co-op Summit in Quebec City 2014, CWCF hosted an International Gathering of Worker Co-ops with over 80 people present, the vast majority from Quebec-based worker co-ops. There were many excellent speakers from the worker co-op movement internationally, including from Mondragon (Spain), Argentina and CICOPA which is the international federation based in Brussels, and discussion sessions on topics such as succession in a worker co-op, and self-management.

Tenacity Works Fund

The Tenacity Works Fund has now completed its fifteenth year of operations. The Fund started as a Pilot Project in 2000. Since the Pilot period, Tenacity has continued to fulfill its mandate of providing financing to worker co-ops and related sectors. The Fund had relatively little demand in 2014-15. One loan application was reviewed, but the proponents were unable to start the co-operative so no loan was placed.

The Fund has investments and cash of approximately \$515,000, and the cash currently held by the fund is about \$376,000. At the moment there are no investment requests pending. Worker co-ops seeking loan capital are encouraged to apply to the Fund.

Peter Hough, our recently retired Financial Officer, continues to participate on behalf of CWCF on the CMC committee which is working towards the creation of the Canadian Co-operative Investment Fund (CCIF). This Fund will have similar objectives to Tenacity Works; however it will be open to all types of co-operatives (including worker co-operatives) across Canada. At the CWCF AGM in 2012 the membership pledged an investment from Tenacity and an additional private source that will flow through the CWCF for up to \$250,000 in the CCIF. The NCIF continues to seek capital from the co-operative sector. Work is underway to legally establish the Fund. It is hoped to have the Fund operational within a few months.

The coming year will see Tenacity continuing to play its role financing worker co-op development. Tenacity with its current cash flow and existing capital base, even with the capital pledged to the National Fund as recommended, is in the position to provide up to \$150,000 in new loans in the coming year. It can provide core support for the continued development of the worker co-op sector in Canada.

RRSP-TFSA Program

CWCF administers Registered Retirement Savings Plan (“RRSP”) investments on behalf of its members and associate members, in conjunction with Concentra Financial. The program continues to grow primarily through the participation by Associate Members. These participants are primarily drawn from the Community Economic Development Funds (and related programs), Opportunity Development Co-operatives and some renewable energy co-operatives. Unfortunately since the regulatory changes in 2011, it has been much more difficult for worker co-ops to meet the eligibility requirements. The program currently has 2,644 contracts and \$38,443,633 under administration. The RRSP program is a net income generator for the Federation and comprised approximately 43% of CWCF’s total revenue in 2015.

<http://canadianworker.coop/funding/rrsp-program/>). After receiving the request from some members to also offer a Tax-Free Savings Account program, CWCF has sought approval from the Canada Revenue Agency and Concentra to offer this as well, and the TFSA program will start in the near future.

Staff

We have had some staff changes this past year. Peter Hough retired as Fund Manager / Financial Officer in March. Peter’s contributions to the worker co-operative movement and to CWCF have been immeasurable, and we owe him a debt of gratitude. Kristin Glenn (RRSP Program Manager and Bookkeeper, and who will come back in March and become our Financial Officer) is on maternity leave until March 2016. Jocelyn Durston has done a great job of filling in during Kristin’s leave. Due to the growth in the RRSP program, CWCF expects to keep Jocelyn on. We are currently seeking an additional, temporary RRSP Program Assistant in Kentville, initially part-time and full-time in January-March 2016. We continue to benefit from the professional and devoted contribution of our management staff: Hazel Corcoran, our Executive Director and Kaye Grant, our Communications Manager. In addition, we were able to hire an Intern in late 2014: Jess Noriega-Lessard, initially with partial funding support from the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association. Jess was hired to design our new logo and web site, and has stayed on part-time to help with a variety of tasks including Conference administration. Since April 2015, Alain Roy has taken on the role of our

volunteer Government Relations Officer, which is greatly appreciated; this role was previously held by Mark Goldblatt (see above). Respectfully submitted, CWCF Board of Directors



Hazel Corcoran – Executive Director, Calgary, AB



Peter Hough – Financial Officer/Fund Manager (Retired in March 2015; now working for CWCF occasionally on contract) Kentville, NS



Kaye Grant – Communications Manager, Winnipeg, MB



Kristin Glenn – RRSP Program Manager and Bookkeeper (Currently on Maternity leave) Woodville, NS



Jocelyn Durston, RRSP Program Manager and Bookkeeper, Woodville, NS



Jess Noriega-Lessard, Intern (Calgary, AB and since July: Montreal, Quebec)

Board

CWCF completed its 24th year stewarded by its team of directors. During the 2014-2015 year, the Board members were:

1. Alain Bridault, President, (ORION, Coopérative de recherche et de conseil) – At-large Director
2. Eric Tusz-King, Vice President (Aster Group Environmental Services Co-operative) - Atlantic Director
3. Yuill Herbert, Treasurer (Sustainability Solutions Group) - At-large Director
4. Jamie Campbell, (ParIT Worker Co-operative) - Prairies/NWT/NU Director
5. Reba Plummer, (Urbane Cyclist) - Ontario Director
6. Jessica Provencher, (le Réseau de la coopération du travail du Québec) - Quebec Director
7. Stephen Elliot-Buckley (Incipe) - BC/Yukon Director

Board Biographies

Alain Bridault, President and At-Large Director (from Quebec)



Alain Bridault has completed doctoral studies in Sociology and holds two Master's degrees (Sociology and Co-operation). He has worked for over 30 years in community and co-operative development in Quebec and other areas of French Canada. He has taught development and management of collectively-owned enterprises at the university level. He has also conducted various research projects in the areas of business succession, entrepreneurial potential of business groups, and social determinants of entrepreneurship. Alain was one of the four founding members of ORION worker co-op in 1986, where he is currently the director of research services and consulting. With regard to Alain's involvement in the worker co-op sector, he was a co-founder and president of a forestry co-operative from 1980 to 1985. He was also chairman of the provincial committee on worker co-operatives, which became RQCCT under his presidency (1986-89). It was during this mandate that he introduced the CJS (Youth Service Co-ops) within Quebec. Alain was elected to the Board of CWCF in 2008 and became the President in 2009. He joined the Executive Committee of the international worker co-op organization, CICOPA, in early 2011. He joined the Board of the RESEAU in 2012 and the Executive Committee of the RESEAU in 2013. Alain joined the Board of CQCM in the winter of 2014-15.

Eric Tusz-King, Vice-President, and Atlantic Director



Eric is a member of Aster Environmental Services Co-operative in Sackville, New Brunswick. Previously Eric was a founding member and manager of EnerGreen that was created in 2006 to help homeowners to have energy efficient homes. He has initiated, encouraged and/or been a member of several different types of co-operatives. The most recent initiative is Open Sky Co-op, which is a multi-stakeholder co-op that provides residence, vocational and social support for people who face

barriers due to mental health or social development. Eric also works part-time as a co-operative developer with the Co-operative Enterprise Council of New Brunswick. Recently Eric became the Course Director for the CoopZone Training Program. He is currently the CWCF Atlantic Board Director.

Yuill Herbert, Treasurer, and At-Large Director (from Atlantic Canada)



Yuill is from Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia and is a CWCF Board Director At-Large. He helped found the environmental consulting worker co-operative Sustainability Solutions Group that currently has members across Canada. SSG has worked for every level of government, major universities and a wide range of private sector and non-profit organisations on sustainability building projects, organisational sustainability and community planning.

Jamie Campbell, Prairies/ NWT/ NU Director



Jamie lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba and is a CWCF Board director. His regions are the Prairies, NWT & Nunavut. He worked at Mondragon Bookstore and Coffeehouse worker co-operative from 2005 to 2010. He currently works at ParIT Worker Co-operative was one of the founding members in 2006. He strongly believes that properly applied information technology, carefully selected to be consistent with co-operative values, can tremendously strengthen the co-operative movement as a whole and the worker co-op movement specifically. His other co-operative roles include 1) serving as ParIT's representative to the Winnipeg Parecon Worker Council (a group local to Winnipeg seeking to achieve participatory economics both within and between members, as well as in the surrounding environment); 2) served as a member of the Supports and Services Co-operative Strategy Working Group in Winnipeg; 3) served as the bookkeeper for the Albert Street Autonomous Zone Marketing Co-op, and 4) serving on the Board of the Data Commons Co-op, where he is past President of the board. He joined the CWCF Board in 2010.

Reba Plummer, Ontario Director



Reba lives in Toronto and is the Ontario Region Director. She has worked at Urbane Cyclist Co-operative since 1999. She completed the Co-op Management Certificate through On Co-op at the Schulich School of Business in April of 2010. She has been a member of the Toronto cycling community since the mid 80s, and was the 1999 and 2008 Cycle Messenger World Champion (cargo bike racing division). In 2002, she worked as the mechanic/teacher with Open Roads, the funded version of what became the popular volunteer-run Wenches with Wrenches. She joined the CWCF board in 2010.

Jessica Provencher, Quebec Director



First inspired by international co-operation and the democratic management of the student movement in the early 2000s, Jessica continues her quest for a more equal world through demystification and promotion of the worker's co-op model. Newly interested by the art of facilitation, she uses every meeting like a learning occasion to be and work better together. Besides being responsible for co-operative life at La Barberie, a worker co-op microbrewery based in downtown Québec city, she is also involved as the co-president of her co-op, a director for the RESEAU and the CWCF, volunteers for the Québec microbrewers association and is following a master program in developing people and organisations. She is also actively learning to say "no" and prioritize her passions.

Stephen Elliott-Buckley, BC / Yukon Director



Stephen Elliott-Buckley is a political scientist. But he is also a husband, father of pre-tweens, poet, social justice activist, political editorialist at PoliticsReSpun.org, labour researcher at CUPE, and a worker co-op advocate. He has made some significant progress in aligning vocation, work, family and volunteerism in recent years, which is something too few enjoy, but something that ought to be shared.

His road to co-op and social justice advocacy started 30 years ago with leadership, community involvement, and international development seminars with the Canadian Red Cross. It was nurtured while studying organizational design at Simon Fraser University, then applied as a high school English and Social Studies teacher in suburban Vancouver. Following a deeper vocation in social justice, he took two political science degrees, expanded his political editorialism and eventually met up with those fellow co-op advocates who all formed Incipe [in-CHEE-pay] in 2012. From the Latin verb "begin," Incipe has begun a nurturing process, internally and externally. Using a mentorship model, members support each other's capacity internally while we focus on the needs of our clients, in helping build their organizations and their capacity.

Stephen Elliott-Buckley brings his pedagogical, analytical, political, strategic, and organizational skills to advancing workplace democracy. By developing Incipe and its members' capacity, helping clients map their way forward, and exploring new models of work-life integration, he sees a glowing future for cooperative models around the country. And with legislative structures that are increasingly supportive of the coop model, now is a key time to expand the vision of workplace democracy.

Statement on the Co-operative Identity

The Statement on the Co-operative Identity is central to the identity of CWCF and of our movement. You can find the full Statement, including the co-operative values and principles, here: <http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles>.

2015 CONFERENCE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CWCF would like to sincerely thank all sponsors (last page), Planning Committee members, and other supporters who have contributed to the success of the Conference in 2015, which was co-organized with CoopZone and the RESEAU. CWCF would like to sincerely thank everyone who volunteered to help at this year's Conference, especially the following Conference Planning Committee members for their many contributions:

- Jessica Provencher, La Barberie/ Le RÉSEAU, Quebec, QC, Chair
- Dru Oja Jay, Montreal, QC
- Isabel Faubert Mailloux, Le RÉSEAU, Montreal, QC
- Kevin Harding, BCCA, BC
- Pascal Billard, SOL-AIR Consultants and CoopZone Board member, Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, QC
- Reba Plummer, Urbane Cyclist, Toronto, ON
- Hazel Corcoran, CWCF Executive Director, Calgary, AB
- Kaye Grant, CWCF Communications Manager, Winnipeg, MB

We would also like to thank CoopZone and the RESEAU for their great contributions to Conference planning, as well as Victor Das (Unite Digital Marketing Co-op, Saskatoon) and Douglas Grant for their contributions in social marketing and visual graphics. At the Conference, additional committed volunteers include: Mathieu Dionne (Réseau staff member), Asher Latif and Mario Cosic (Urbane Cyclist Worker Co-op, Toronto), Tommy Allen (Urban Eatin' Landscapes), and others.

Last but not least, we thank all conference presenters and facilitators, especially keynote speaker Esteban Kelly, Co-Executive Director of the US Federation of Worker Co-ops.

Acknowledgements Remerciements

The CWCF and CoopZone would like to sincerely thank the following for their financial support of the 2015 Conference

La FCCT et CoopZone aimeraient remercier sincèrement les organismes suivants pour leur soutien financier au Congrès 2015

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