

# CWCF's Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization & Inclusion (JEDDI) Business Conversions to Social Purpose Organization (SPOs) Project:

*A PROJECT OVERVIEW FROM START TO FINISH*

By: Janielle Maxwell  
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# Slides Overview

- Phase 1: Background Work, Research & Information Gathering
- Phase 2: Raising Awareness, Knowledge Sharing/Story-telling, & Communication Outputs
- Phase 3: Supporting Active Cases and Creating an Ecosystem for Improved Social Innovation/ Social Finance Sustainability



# PHASE I: BACKGROUND WORK + RESEARCH AND INFORMATION GATHERING



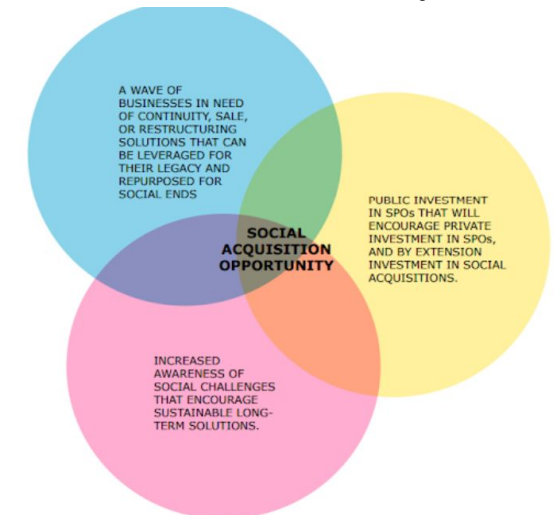
# The Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation & Resiliency's Legacy Leadership Lab (L3)

- Through the Government of Canada's Investment Readiness Program (IRP) WISIR (an outcome of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Social Innovation Generation project at the University of Waterloo) pioneered work in Canada on social acquisitions/ business conversions.
- Their L3 project focused on raising awareness around social acquisitions to combat Canada's business closure dilemma, challenges brought about by COVID-19, and issues of social justice.
- Their final report can be found here:  
<https://uwaterloo.ca/legacy-leadership-lab/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/finalreportfinal.pdf>
- The JEDDI Social Acquisition/ Business Conversion Project was situated as a continuation of this work, funded by the IRP

Meg Ronson, Former Innovation Lab Manager at WISIR



Dr. Sean Geobey, Co-Director of WISIR



(The Legacy Leadership Lab Final Report, 2021)



# Research & Information Gathering

- This stage included grounding our work on the knowledge that already exists, including the current scope of Social Purpose Organizations (SPOs) and business conversions in Canada
- Key resources during this phase included: [L3's final report on social acquisitions](#), [The Co-op Convert Project](#) spearheaded by Dr. Marcelo Vieta, [In My Own Voice \(IMove's\) Co-op Conversation Guidebook](#), and [Louder than Ten's Co-op Learning Resources](#)
- We also gathered information on the experiences of members of Equity-Denied Groups (EDGs) in the business investment space; which showcased that the impacts of COVID-19 and financial instability have disproportionate impacts on business owners from EDGs.
- As an EDG when it comes to youth, we found (via secondary data) that sharing about SPOs and business conversions as an economic alternative to capitalism/extractive industries, negligence of racial & social justice, and environmental negligence proved useful for their engagement in the Social Economy.
  - [Have you ever wanted to drop out of Capitalism? Youtube Video on Co-operative Housing/Living](#)
  - [Article on Youth Led Social Entrepreneurship](#)

*Equity-Denied Groups (EDGs): women, youth, BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, people with disabilities,*

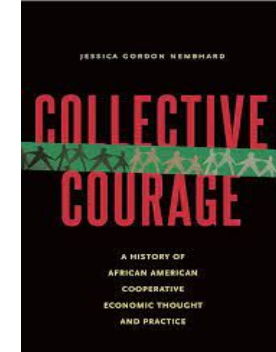


# Research & Information Gathering cont.

- We found that the basis of Co-operative economics is grounded in many of the pre-colonial and modern day practices of members of African, African-American, Caribbean, Indigenous (Canadian and international Indigenous groups), & Latin American racialized groups as well as women and the Queer community.

Some resources that helped to expand our knowledge on this front included:

- [Royal Roads University: The Role of Social Purpose Organizations in Building Global Resilience, perspectives from Ecuador & India](#) Video
- [Black Co-op History Resource List](#)
- [Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard on Co-operative Economics and Civil Rights](#) Video
- [Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard on Solidarity Economics](#) Video
- [Models of Native Co-operative Ownership](#) Video
- [ROSCAs in Ontario](#)
- [Indigenizing the Co-operative Model](#) Article
- [Indigenous Co-operatives in Canada: The Complex Relationship between Co-operatives, Community Economic Development, Colonization, & Culture](#) by Ushnish Sengupta Article
- [The Critical Role of Women in U.S Co-operative History](#) Article

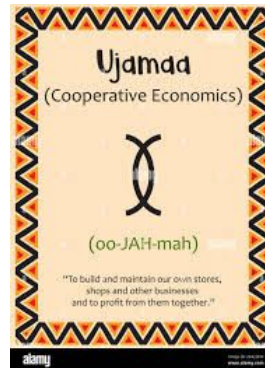


# Research & Information Gathering cont.

## Key Learnings



- Terminology is important: Equity-Seeking or Equity-Deserving VS. Equity-Denied (insight from Mohammed Zaqout from Lightwork Co-op)
- African Frameworks and their interactions with Co-ops and other SPO economic models “*Onye Aghana Nwanne Ya*”, which translates roughly from Igbo to English as leaving no man behind/ no man must suffer alone & Ujamaa/Ubuntu (insight from Juliet ‘Kego from Black Women Professional Worker Co-op & Whole Woman Network)



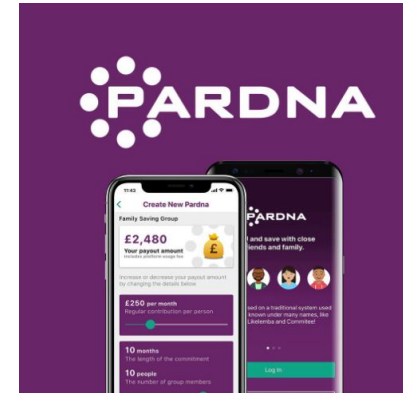
- In the Indigenous communities of Turtle Island, “*cultural patterns of economic co-operation were clearly ingrained in the fabric of every tribe*” (insight from Susanna Redekop-CCEDNet)
- Thus, values of economic co-operation and solidarity economics were not spearheaded by colonialists, but rather those whom they oppressed

# Research & Information Gathering cont.

## Key Learnings cont.



→ “Andria Barrett, a Black Canadian of Jamaican heritage...revealed that she is part of a Jamaican ROSCA called a ‘partner’ to support her campaign fundraising, using informal funding streams to run for political office and, in turn, transforming the lives of marginalized and excluded people.” [\(Source\)](#)



→ There exists a rich history of Indigenous led Cp-ops in Canada, though some operate more informally, they are making lasting contributions in their communities



- We thus centered the project on facilitating and promoting SPOs and business conversions based on the principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization, and Inclusion (JEDDI)



# Research & Information Gathering cont.

## Some key resources for Business Conversions Included:



- [Ontario Co-op Association's Co-operative Business Conversions Page](#)
- [Transitioning a Business to a Co-op by Coopcreator.ca:](#)  
<https://coopcreator.ca/resource/business-to-a-co-operative/>
- [Yes Magazine on Louder than Ten's Co-op Conversion](#)
- [The Co-op Convert's Projects Business Transition Steps Web page](#) (different link than the one prior)
- [Co-op and Mutual's Canada Business Conversions to Co-operatives in Canada Brochure](#)

& once again

- [The Legacy Leadership Lab's Final Report](#)



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# PHASE II: RAISING AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE SHARING/ STORY-TELLING, & COMMUNICATION MATERIALS



# Communication & Education

- Much of our awareness raising, knowledge sharing, and story-telling took place at the various webinars, workshops, and presenters we hosted or participated in throughout the JEDDI Project. We focused our efforts on connecting with EDGs to revitalize a sense of return to the Co-op & SPO models.
- We developed a Communications & Marketing Plan first, to detail the channels to be used for dissemination of materials and information.
- We also created an Evaluation Framework & Logic Model to assess the reach and impact of our events

## Main Outputs Included:

- Online one-pagers on SPOs; this includes worker co-ops, consumer co-ops, social enterprises, and relevant examples. They also detail [steps an individual should consider](#) for converting their traditional business to a SPO (buyer & seller sides), [case studies of successful conversions that highlight EDGs](#), and [the importance of the integration of EDGs in this work](#).
- A [brochure](#) and posters that contain tips for business conversion from both the buyer and seller perspectives.



# Communication & Education cont.

## Main Outputs cont:

- [A Youtube series highlighting current EDGs spearheading businesses in the Co-op & SPO sectors](#)
- [Business conversion resources page including educational, interactions with EDGs, financial support etc.](#)
- [A summary of Frequently Asked Questions throughout the JEDDI project](#)

## Events throughout the Project: (both hosted & participated in)



Our session at the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation's annual congress at York University



Janielle Maxwell & Juliet 'Kego host and speak at a community session on Business Conversions to SPOs for EDGs at Glitter Bean Co-operative Cafe in Halifax, NS



JEDDI Team accepting CMC's JEDI Initiative of the Year Award at their 2023 congress  
Left to right: Juliet 'Kego (CWCF BIPOC board advisor), Janielle Maxwell (JEDDI BC Project Coordinator), Paul DeVillers (past CWCF BIPOC board advisor and Metis advocate), & Hazel Corcoran (CWCF's Executive Director)



# Communication & Education cont.

## Events & Knowledge Sharing throughout the Project:

- All our virtual events & some in-person, engaged and were attended by our active cases & those who had no prior understanding of SPOs!

1. [The November 2022 pre-conference session](#): Business Conversions to SPOs for Equity-Denied Groups (November 16th, 2022)
2. [Webinar 1: Business Conversions to SPOs for Equity Denied Groups](#) (February 9th, 2023)
3. [IRP Partner Lunch & Learn Presentation](#) on JEDDI Business Conversion Project and EDG Intersections (March 13th, 2023)
4. [Session at Women's Economic Council 's annual conference](#) on BIPOC Groups interactions with SPOs (May 11th, 2023)
5. [Presentation at Glitter Bean Cafe](#) on the Need, History, & Legacy of Social Purpose (May 23rd, 2023)
6. [Session at the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation Conference](#) at York University (May 31st, 2023)
7. Co-ops and Mutuals Canada annual Congress/ Young Leaders Showcase (June 13th, 2023)
8. Saskatoon Co-op Association AGM (June 19th, 2023)
9. [University of Saskatchewan- The Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives' \(CCSC\) Co-op Conversations](#) (September 6th, 2023)
10. Global Innovation Co-op Summit Panel on Digital Co-op Education (September 2023)
11. JEDDI Mental Health & SPOs Session at Annual Conference (November 14th, 2023)
12. [Webinar 2: How to Convert your Business to a Co-op/ SPO](#) (January 24th, 2024)
13. [Interview with SETSI on the JEDDI Business Conversion Project](#) (March 8th, 2024)
14. Knowledge Exchange & Eco-system Building Session (March 20th, 2024) see session notes [here](#)

CMC's Annual Congress, 2023 Youth Co-operators  
(Kristen Murray, Janielle Maxwell, Rosa Poirier-McKiggan )



Screenshot of Webinar 2 on Business Conversions, 2023



Session at GICS, Digital Co-op Education

From left to right: Claude Andre Guillotte- USherbrooke, Nicole Waldron- Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, Janielle Maxwell- CWCF, Kristen Murray- Newfoundland Federation of Co-operatives



Hazel Corcoran- CWCF Executive Director & Janielle Maxwell at Glitter Bean Cafe Event



Screenshot of our presentation at WEC's annual conference, 2023



Juliet 'Kego' CWCF BIPOC board advisor speaks at Glitter Bean Cafe Session

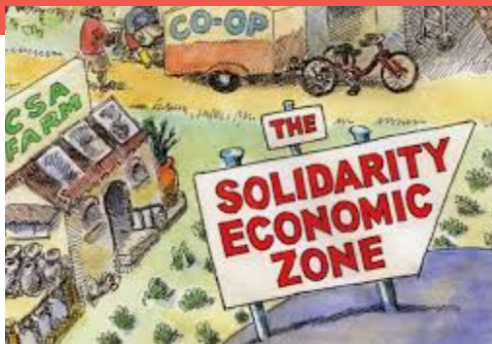


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# PHASE III: SUPPORTING ACTIVE CASES & CREATING AN ECOSYSTEM FOR IMPROVED SI/SF SUSTAINABILITY



# Supporting Active Cases & Contributing to the growth of the SI/SF Ecosystem

- This phase involved sourcing active cases\* (whom we define as individuals or groups who are actively pursuing business conversions to a SPO -including Co-ops, developing one from the ground up, or on the verge of doing so) and supporting them through:
  - Free early stage consultations (with Kaye Grant who has over 30 years of experience & Janielle Maxwell, the JEDDI Project Coordinator) to answer questions, offer guidance, and connect individuals to service providers, financial resources, etc.
  - Inviting them to the JEDDI BC Project events mentioned prior and other free CWCF resources i.e. Worker Co-op 101 series and What is a Worker Co-op?



- Sessions for collaboration and eco-system building





# Supporting Active Cases & Contributing to the growth of the SI/SF Ecosystem

- Noting that there is a lack of education in mainstream academic systems on Co-operative and SPO business models, we hired 2 youth interns from Equity-Denied Groups through the [Create Action Youth Employment Program](#). One of which moved on to another position in the SI/SF sector.

**Key Outputs to Support Active Cases, those interested in SPOs/Co-ops, & to strengthen the knowledge base & resources in the sector include:**

- [Question & Answer web form](#) (individuals can submit their questions about their conversion, SPOs/ Co-ops, etc. and receive a response within 72 hours)
- [Service Provider Database](#) (70-80 experts, business consultants, Co-op developers etc. in the SPO/ Co-op sector)
- [Frequently asked questions Web page](#) (questions asked throughout the JEDDI BC project and answers including financial aspects)
- Knowledge Exchange & Eco-system Building Session (March 20th, 2024) see session notes [here](#)





# Supporting Active Cases & Contributing to the growth of the SI/SF Ecosystem

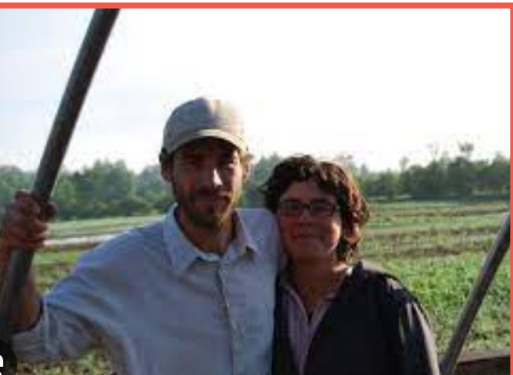
## Organizations we were Able to Support Include:

1. [Detailing Knights](#): a prospective car cleaning platform or multi-stakeholder Co-op (Black led)
2. [Crow's Commons](#): a prospective multi-stakeholder farming & art Co-op (Queer led)
3. A craft store/ creative space in the Greater Toronto Area: an aspiring Social Enterprise (wishes not to be named but is BIPOC led)
1. [OASIS Food Venture](#): a prospective for profit platform or multi-stakeholder Co-op (serves BIPOC, immigrant/refugee)
2. [Cedar Down Farm](#): an aspiring Co-operative farm in Neustadt, Ontario (partially women led and by a cultural minority)



Ryan Knight & Colleague at Detailing Knights

Leslie Moskovits & Jeff Boesch owners of Cedar Down Farm



Roots Rising



OASIS Microfarms Network

Some initiatives by OASIS Food Venture



Crows Commons On-Farm Activities



*\*We held many more consultations, the above listed are strictly those who were Co-op/SPO conversion or development cases (we also supported groups already operating as a Co-op but who have governance issues or concerns)*

# Supporting Active Cases & Contributing to the growth of the SI/SF Ecosystem cont.

## Organizations we were Able to Support Include cont.:

6. [Zawadi Farms](#): a prospective multi-stakeholder urban farm (Black led)
7. Afripride Kenyan Women's Group: a prospective multi-stakeholder Co-op (Black led and serving)
8. [Superior Seasons](#): an online farmers market and prospective multi-stakeholder Co-op (serves Northern/remote Ontario)



Owner of Zawadi Farms- Jessey Njau



9. [The Big Carrot](#): health food grocery store and aspiring worker Co-op (serves diverse communities)



Inside the Big Carrot on the Danforth Avenue Toronto, ON

10. [The Community Company](#): a community building organization and potential multi-stakeholder Co-op (Asian led)

3 lessons from Guelph's founder of The Community Company on how changemakers can do purposeful work

I get to wake up every day and live out my life's purpose, which is building better communities, writes Justin Chan



Justin Chan founder of the Community Company in Media





# Supporting Active Cases & Contributing to the growth of the SI/SF Ecosystem cont.

## Organizations we were Able to Support Include:

11. [Whole Woman Network](#): a prospective for-profit worker co-op (Black-led, serves all)
12. [Glitter Bean Co-operative Cafe](#): successful conversion (Queer led/ focused)
13. [The Makehouse Co-op](#): a successful conversion (Woman & Queer led)
14. [Eadha Bakery Co-op](#): a successful conversion (Queer led/ focused)
15. [Louder than Ten](#): a successful conversion to a Co-op (serves diverse communities)



Glitter Bean Cafe's Artistic Drinks



Worker-owners of the Makehouse Co-op



Some Eadha Bakery worker-owners  
Left to right: Cora Wiens, Monique LaPlante, Tamika Krush



## NEXT STEPS

The Canadian Worker Co-op Federation aims to continue the work spearheaded during the JEDDI Business Conversion Project by:

- Continuing to check-in with and monitor the businesses with whom we've been in contact
- Directing these and new business owners to service providers and other resources when the time is right
- Continued commitment to JEDDI, read our [JEDDI Action Plan here](#)



## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- **The Government of Canada's Investment Readiness Program and the SI/SF Fund**
- Sean Geobey & Meg Ronson from L3/ Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation & Resiliency for laying the groundwork
- Dr. Marcelo Vieta, Co-op Convert Project/ University of Toronto for your research and tremendous work
- Hazel Corcoran, CWCF Executive Director
- Kaye Grant, CWCF Operations, Communications and Member Services Manager
- Russ Christianson, Co-op Developer
- Jessica Cherry, Northern Foodways Development Network
- Juliet 'Kego, BIPOC Board Advisor
- Nasreen Omar, BIPOC Board Advisor
- Sope Ogunrinde, Co-op and Mutuals Canada
- Daphane Nelson, CoActive Developments
- Mohammed Zaqout, Lightwork Consulting Co-op
- Chloe Williams, CWCF Executive Assistant
- Ven Drake, CWCF Information & Technology Assistant
- Kenzie Love, CWCF Communications Assistant
- Cora Wiens, Founder of Eadha Bakery
- Jennifer Williams, Owner of Firefly Insights
- Michelle Colussi- SHIFT Collaborative
- Jordan Rodier, Capstan
- Daniel Brunette, Co-op and Mutuals Canada
- Wendy Petersen, Community Futures
- Dawn Walker, CoopZone
- Melissa Graham, Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
- Lauren Lee, Resource Assistance for Youth (RAY)
- Kathryn Camfield, the Makehouse Co-op
- Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard, City University of New York
- Nadine Bernard, Indigevisor
- Susanna Redekop & Marisol Fornoni from CCEDNet
- Victor Beausoleil, SETSI
- Marty Frost, Co-op Developer
- Vanessa Hammond, First Ownership Co-operative

**FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION, AND  
PARTICIPATION THROUGHOUT THIS PROJECT**