

Supporting Justice, Diversity, De-colonization and Inclusion in the Canadian Worker Co-op Sector

Community Advisory Circle presentation

Presenter: Julia Fursova (UNB), Emma Shaikh (Artisan Apparel & Durham Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Center), Kisa Hamilton (Transform Practice)

Facilitator: Lucenia Ortiz (MCHB Co-op)

Academic team: Dr Julia Fursova, UNB; Dr Ola Tjornbo, UNB, Dr Derya Tarhan, U of Guelf;
RAs: Olivia Kenny, SNA mapping; Ashlyn MacGregor-Kirkham, KMb, Piper McCullough, Data Analysis

Calling in and calling out – JEDDI transformation in the Canadian worker co-op movement

The project examines how worker co-operatives led by members of **Equity-Denied Groups (EDGs)**, including women, newcomers, racialized individuals, LGBTQ2S+ communities, and persons with disabilities, connect and collaborate within Canada's co-operative sector.

12 EDG-led co-ops responded to the survey (out of 20 EDG-led co-ops on our list)

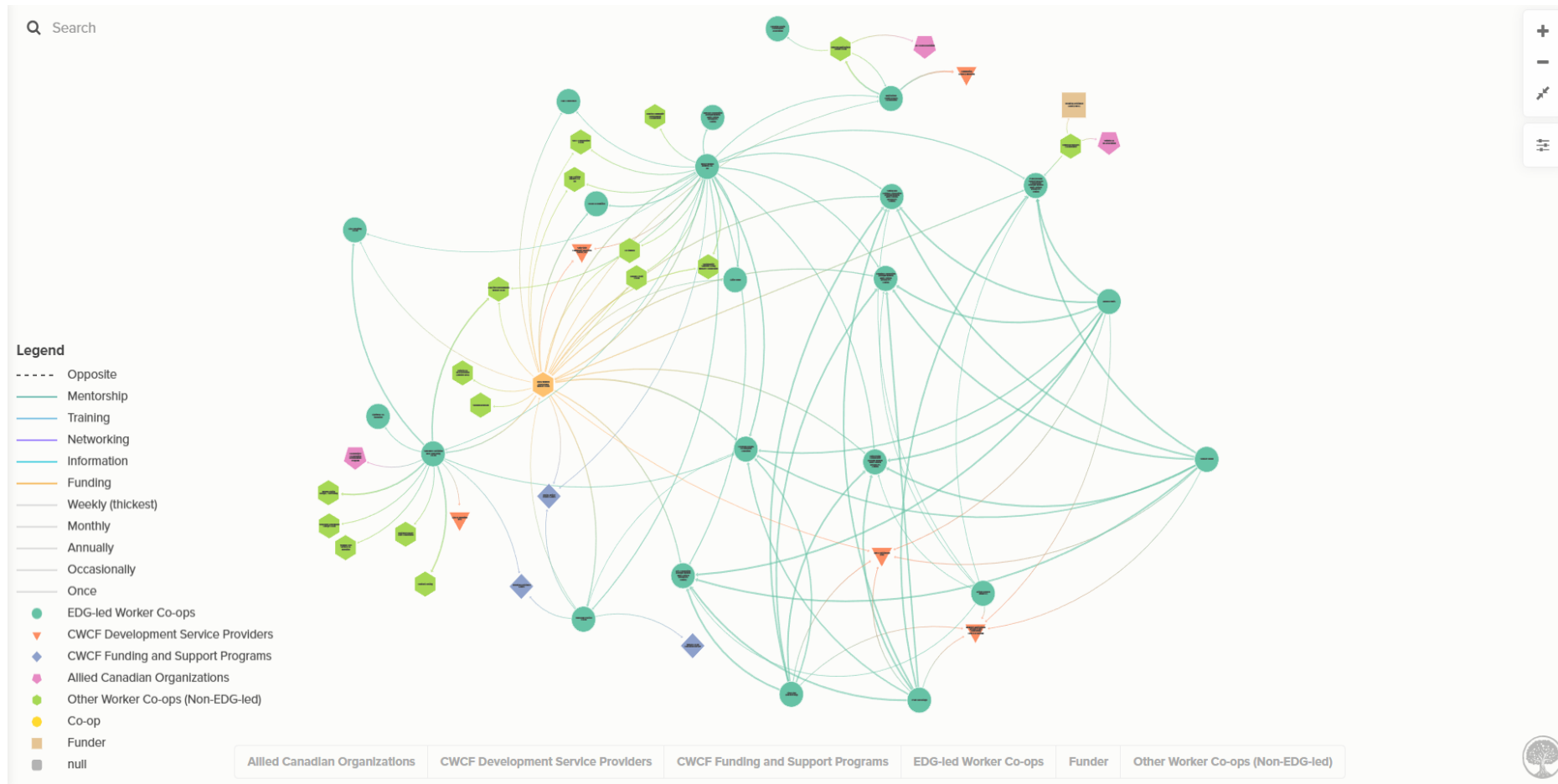
9 individual interviews and **1 group interview** with 5 co-op members

Social Network Mapping with EDG-led co-ops

Using survey data and **social network mapping (Kumu visualization)**, the analysis explores three main questions:

- Where is collaboration already strong?
- Where do systemic gaps remain?
- What types of investments could strengthen both local and national cooperative infrastructure?

Connection System map



5 clusters

WMRCC Incubation Hub – a strong example of community-based enterprise development

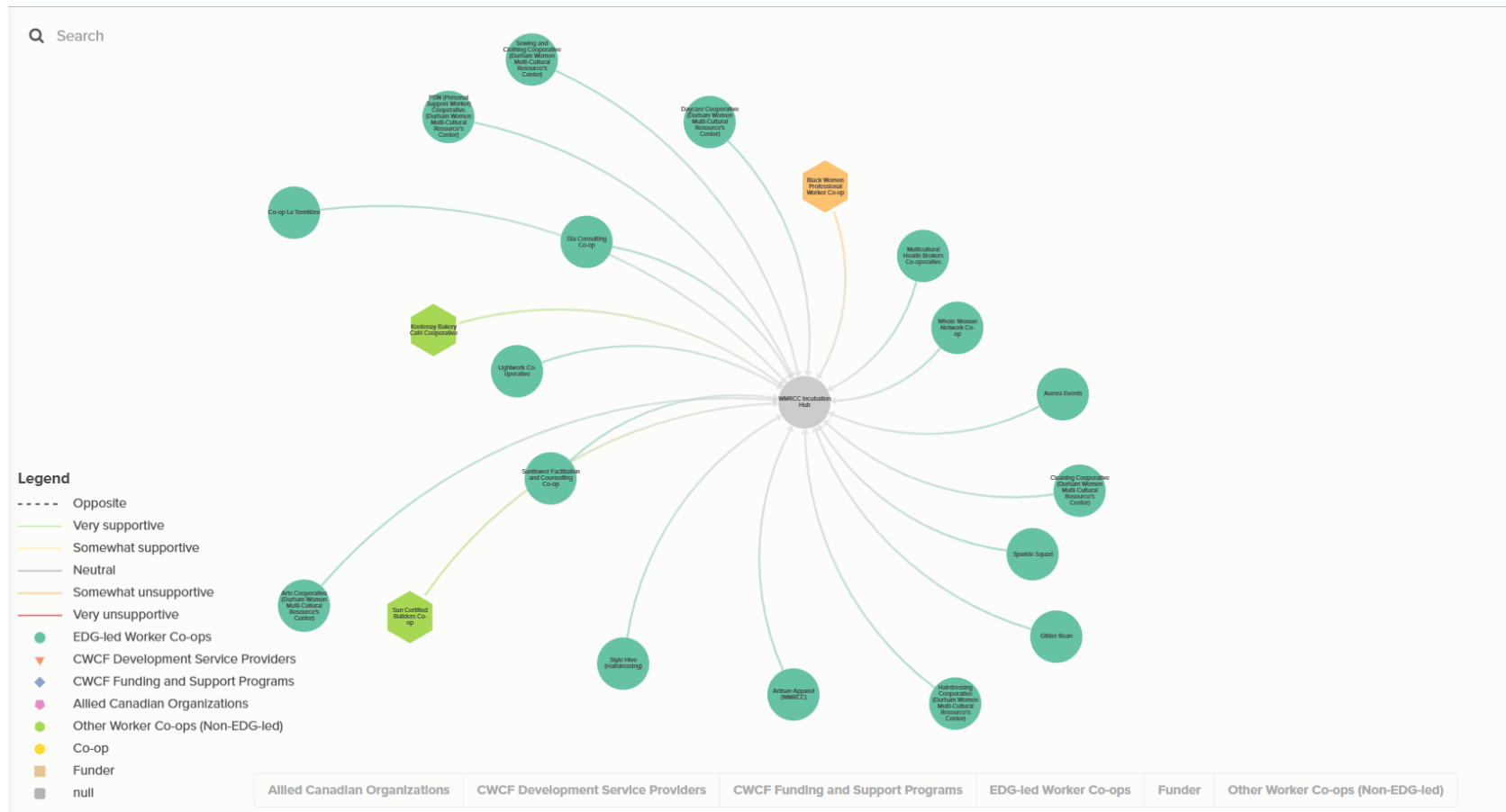
Health and Care Ecosystem – cross-provincial collaboration in inclusive health and caregiving

Knowledge and Training Network – mentorship and education as the ecosystem's foundation

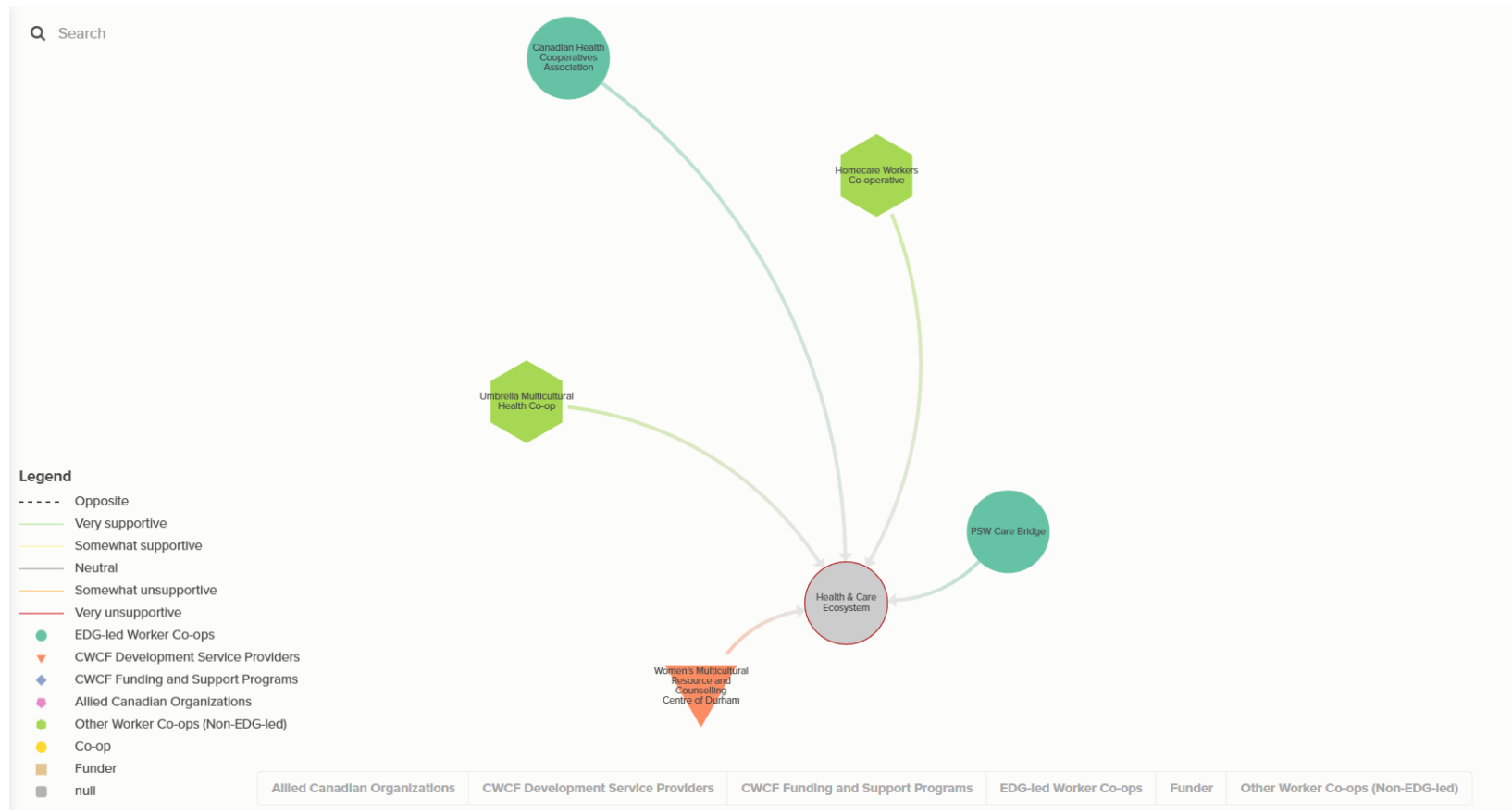
Social Innovation and Facilitation Cluster – connecting EDG co-ops to national and systems-change networks

Funding and Policy Interface – the area where the system is most underdeveloped

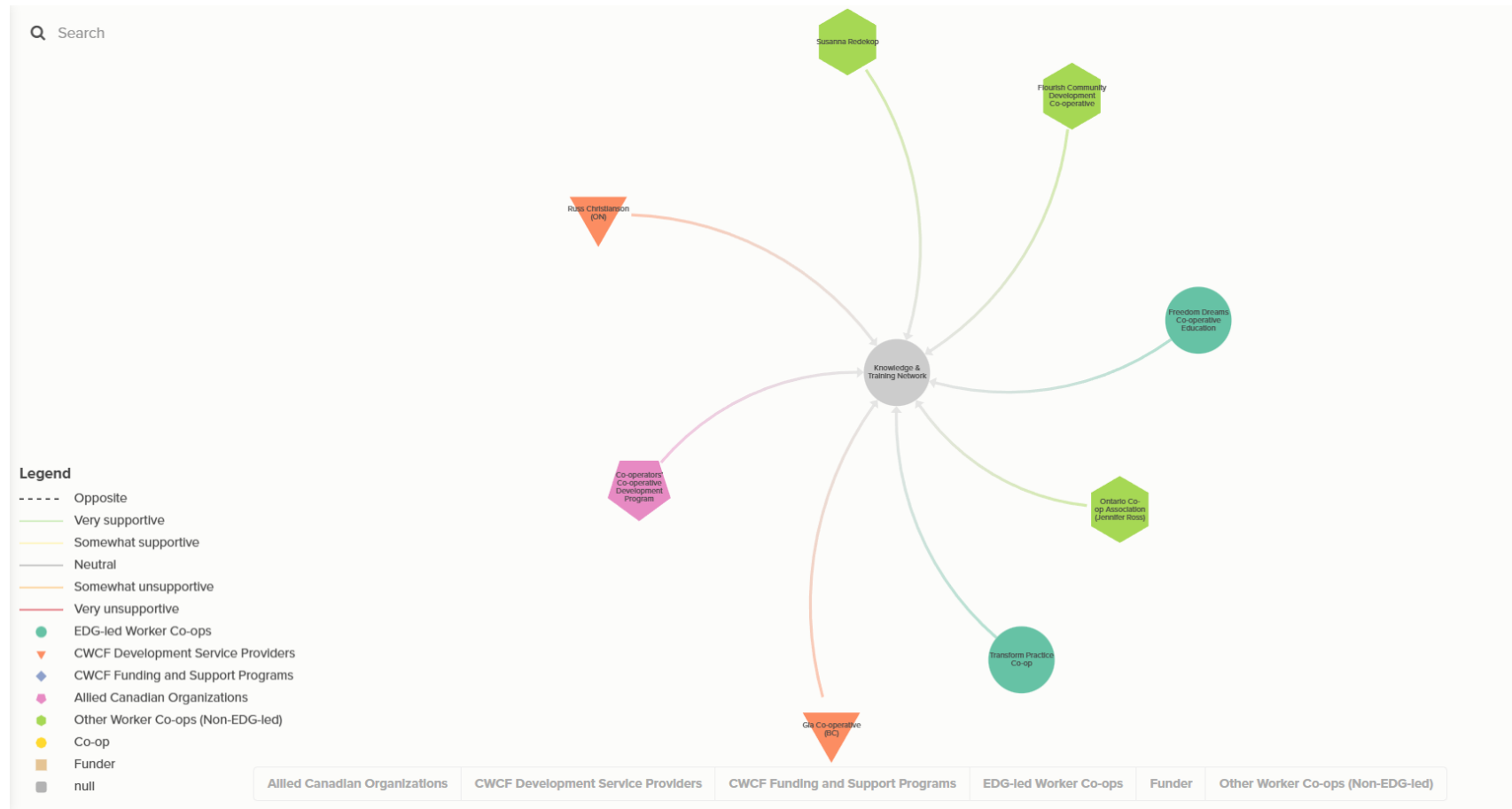
Cluster 1: WMRCC Incubation Hub (Durham Region, ON)



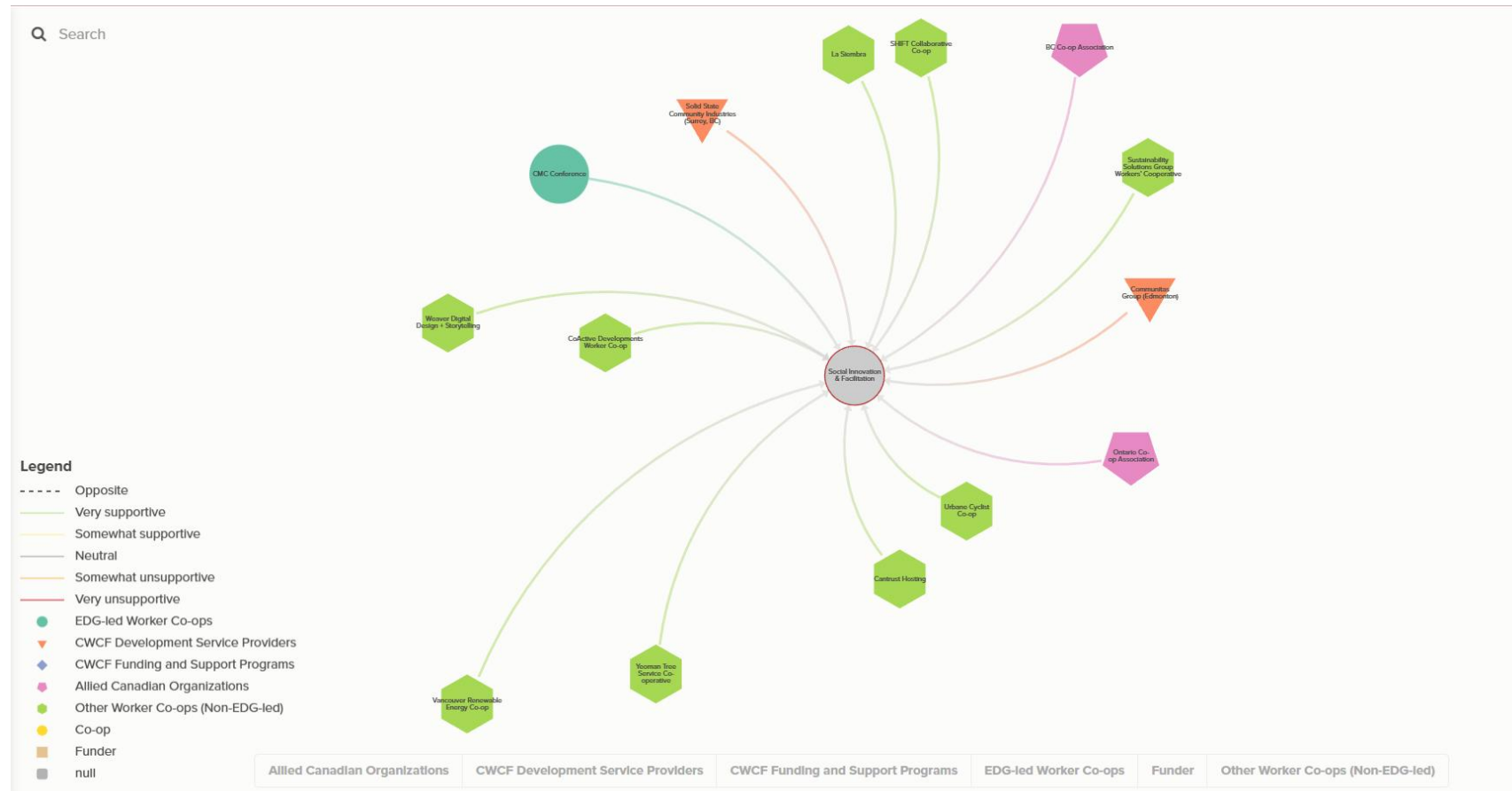
Cluster 2: Health and Care Ecosystem



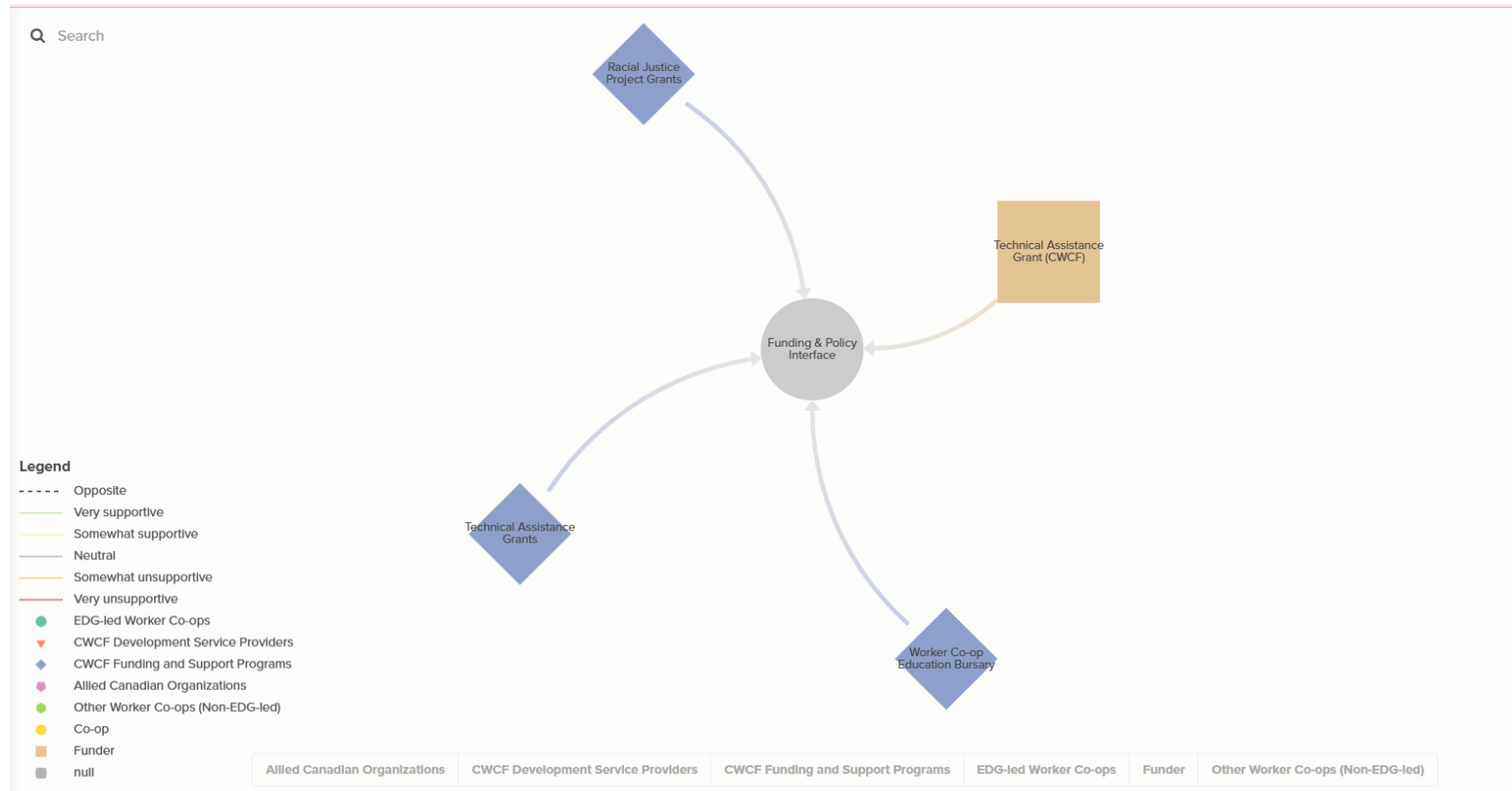
Cluster 3: Knowledge and Training Network



Cluster 4: Social Innovation and Facilitation



Cluster 5: Funding and Policy Interface



Systems Level Insights

Two levels of operation

Leadership concentration

Equity friction

Investment readiness

Checking in with members

- What resonates with you?
- What doesn't reflect your experiences?
- What new questions arise?



Put yourself on the map!

Online blitz survey



Insights from Communications Flow and Systems Dynamics section of the survey (open-ended questions)

Who are the most influential organizations in the Canadian worker co-op ecosystem?

CWCF

WMRCC

Ontario Co-
operative
Association

The Co-op
Zone

What support is missing in the ecosystem that would help your co-op?

Educating communities on worker co-ops

Advancing co-operation among the co-ops

Access to funding, including seed funding for start-ups and financing for larger projects, such as housing, food security and social enterprise.

Co-op developer programs targeted to EDG-led co-ops and representative of diverse demographics.

Co-operation with the co-ops in the US

Targeted funding for BIPOC and youth to attend co-op conferences and educational events.

Provincial co-op association could play a bigger role in the ecosystem

Are there any ecosystem dynamics or relationships you would like to see change?

Community building initiatives for co-ops:

- Community of Practice for co-ops
- Bringing together co-op developers for a healing and relationships building retreat

Networking and partnership

- Connecting co-ops with suppliers and supply chains
- Creating a system of networking and referrals between co-ops, credit unions and other funding organizations
- Partnering with non-profits and associations serving equity-denied groups/communities
- Building connections with the US-based co-ops

Other suggestions:

An information campaign for the general public on co-ops as alternative economy

Targeted information campaign on co-ops and co-op development among equity-deserving groups/communities

Picture booklet in plain language on what is a co-op and how to start one

Training on marketing, customer service, communication skills, workplace safety, business insurance and other aspects of running a business.

Checking in with members

- What resonates with you?
- What doesn't reflect your experiences?
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Strategic Recommendations

Develop a National EDG Co-op Academy

Create an EDG Funding Navigator

Host Regular Cross-Cluster Gatherings

Strengthen Policy and Visibility Work

Advance Equitable Procurement Opportunities

Let's explore the steps towards this vision

