

## Agenda

- Introductions
- History
- Stories
- Bringing it home
- Evaluations



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## The Beginning

- Rochdale 1844
  - Weavers set up co-op store
  - Created the Rochdale Principles
- Nova Scotia 1861
  - Coal miners set up co-op store in Stellerton
- Farmers
- Financiers



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## The Rules

### Rochdale Principles

1. Open membership
2. Democratic Control
3. Distribution of surplus in proportion to trade
4. Payment of limited interest on capital
5. Political and religious neutrality
6. Cash trading
7. Promotion of education



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## A New Century—the 1900s

- Co-ops becoming more popular
- Co-op education became important
- Political engagement formalized in Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
- 1961 New Democratic Party
  - Joined Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and Canadian Labour Congress



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## Antigonish

- Up to 1930s farmers and workers prime movers for co-operatives
- In Nova Scotia, Catholic priests were the movers from 1930-1950s
  - Small community study groups established to learn about co-op principles, how to apply them in real life
  - Results: credit unions, co-op stores, fishing and housing co-ops across the Maritimes



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## Tompkinsville

- Prior to WW II people encouraged to create their own housing collectively
- Planned, designed and built housing as a co-op
- 11 homes created
- Once built and mortgage paid off, the co-op was dissolved

**1936 to 1960:** 1,500 co-op homes built in the Maritimes and a further 6,000 in Quebec

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## The War Years and After

reported that over 300,000 housing units were required for Canadians

Huge growth of the Co-op movement. Number of members doubled to over 1 million by 1948



Government body created (CMHC) to promote better housing but as late as 1963 only supported individual ownership

1943

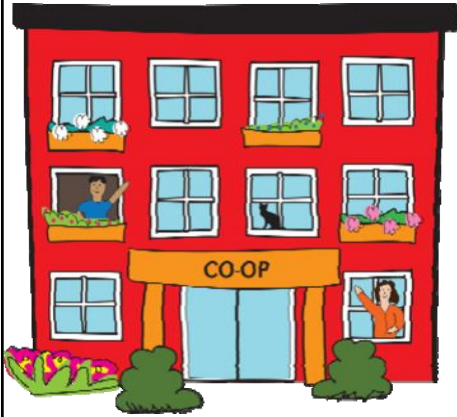
1943-1948

1963

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## Young People



- 1913 first student co-op—Guelph, Ont.
- By 1970 student co-ops in:
  - Toronto, Kingston, Guelph, Waterloo, Ottawa, London, Winnipeg and Fredericton
  - Some successful and some not, but lots learned
- Pestalozzi Co-op, Ottawa 1971
  - \$7 million mortgage
  - \$5 million value
  - Architect and builder charged with corruption
  - Put into receivership; CMCH sold for \$3.3 million to private realtor despite the Co-op's higher bid.

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## The Beginnings of Change

- 1960s and the development of housing co-ops as we now know them
  - Willow Park Co-op in Winnipeg



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## Joining Forces

Co-operative Union of Canada and the Canadian Labour Congress work together to lobby for a national Co-operative housing program

1965

Canadian Union of Students join in also and the Canadian Co-operative Foundation is created.

- Forerunner of the Canadian Housing Federation of Canada (50 years ago)

1968

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Growth  
1970-1995

Federal Government  
commitment to help fund the  
development of co-op housing

BC, Ontario and Quebec  
governments create provincial  
programs

1995 Co-op and social housing  
programs effectively stopped.

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## Today in Canada

- 2203 housing co-ops
- 91,552 units
- 250,000 people live in co-ops
  
- 50% are single women with or without children
- 11% visible minorities
- 20% immigrants
- 4% indigenous
- 12% physical disabilities



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Source: CHFC Website



## Today in the World

- 2.6 million co-operatives
- 1 billion members
- Employ 250 million people
- Generate \$2.5 trillion US in turnover
  
- 50% of Canadians are members of co-ops



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Source: International Co-operative Alliance Website



## Amazing Stories

### Single Mom on social assistance

- Moves into co-op
- Runs for the Board
- Becomes Treasurer
- Later able to transfer skills learned plus experience in co-op into a bookkeeping position



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## Amazing Stories

Low income family moves into co-op with children

- Active members in their co-op
- Elected to the Board of Directors
- Kids leave home, go to university and become successfully employed
- Kids apply for membership in the co-op and are accepted. They want to give back to the community that supported them as they grew up and because the co-op is a great place to live.



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## Amazing Stories



New Canadian loses housing, income, husband

- Accepted into a co-op and begins to rebuild her life
- Super grateful for the opportunity
- Lets everyone she can know about the caring community she now calls home

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## Amazing Stories

Long-term co-op member gives notice

- Relocating due to employment change
- Last day; lets staff know in a tearful good bye that the co-op saved her life and she'll never forget the opportunities of living there.



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## Amazing Stories



Founding co-op member, contributed over 22 years

- Director, member of on-call and membership committees
- Took great care of his unit
- Was liked and respected in the co-op
- Sadly passes away
- Over half the co-op attends his celebration of life respecting his contributions to making the co-op a great place to live.

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Break into small groups and discuss your amazing stories.

Report back in 10 minutes.

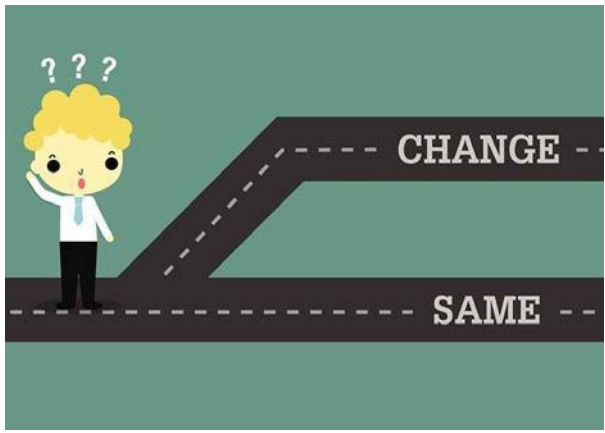
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## What do we do now?

- Member selection process
- New member integration
- Communicating with members
- Member education
- Community-building



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## Creating the Enthusiasm

### Today's Reality

- How to engage co-op members
- Too many people and too few units
- Conflicting priorities
- Unhappy members??



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## What can we do differently?

"If you do what  
you've always done,  
you'll get what  
you've always  
gotten."

- Tony Robbins

- Member selection process
- New member integration
- Communicating with members
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## Co-op principles

1. Open membership
2. Democratic control
3. Economic participation
4. Independence
5. Co-operative education
6. Co-operation among co-operatives
7. Community



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## Wrap up and evaluation

- Please complete the evaluation form
- What one thing can you take back to your co-op as a result of today's workshop?
- How will you introduce that one thing?



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## Resources

- International Co-operative Alliance: Profiles of a Movement: Co-operative Housing around the World—April 2012
- Economic Impact of the Nova Scotia Co-operatives—George Karaphillis and Alicia Lake 2015
- Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
- A History of Co-operative Housing—Leslie Cole--2008

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*This workshop was first presented by John Wilkinson at a CHF Canada Nova Scotia education event in the fall of 2017.*