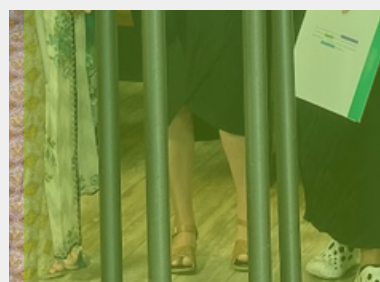
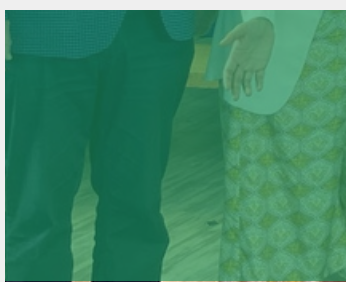
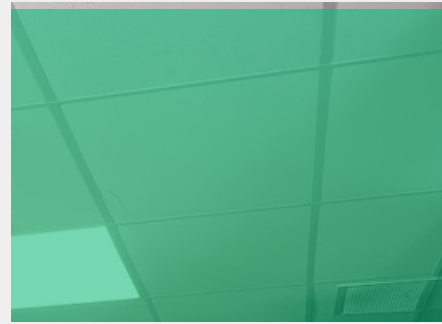


BC Co-op Association

Annual Report 2022-23



About

We are the voice of BC’s co-operative sector.

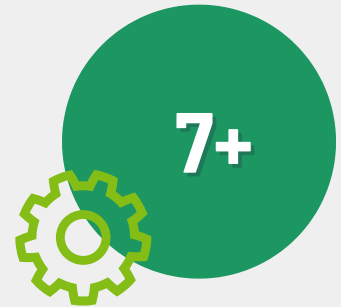
The BC Co-op Association (BCCA) is the knowledge and resource centre for co-operatives in BC, where co-ops and credit unions come together to collaborate, network, get support, learn, and contribute knowledge to shape BC’s co-op movement. We provide a collective platform for our members to participate in customized programs and services, receive the latest sector information, connect and share ideas, and benefit from our ongoing advocacy and lobbying efforts.



Number of British Columbians who belong to a co-operative or credit union



Number of BCCA members (as of May, 2023)



Number of sectors BCCA members are active in

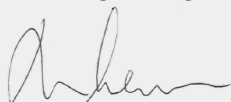


Message from the Board Chair

The last year was an eventful one for BCCA and the co-op sector. We launched new programs and services, strengthened emerging co-ops and grew the P6 Deposit Pool. The province's unprecedented \$2 Million investment in the sector was the result of years of advocacy and we are so excited that this work has come to fruition. These funds were allocated to grow BC's co-op economy and inspire a new generation of co-operators. I am particularly pleased to see the emergence of co-ops created among and for equity-seeking groups. This demonstrates the strength of the model to create opportunities for economic prosperity for everyone.

I would like to acknowledge the collaboration with our sister organization, Alberta Community and Co-operative Association (ACCA). When our shared Executive Director, Paul Cabaj, resigned earlier this year, the board of BCCA made the decision not to renew the management services agreement between our associations. The collaboration brought a creative energy to both our associations. We are pleased to have worked alongside our ACCA colleagues and are appreciative of the lessons that we learned along the way.

About a year ago, I stepped into my first year as the Chair of BCCA and I am very appreciative of the support from my fellow directors and credit the leadership of directors that came before me. The heart of co-operatives is connectedness and this year we have seen how the strength of partnerships is so very critical to our success today and our ability to thrive in the years ahead. Thank you to BCCA members for your loyalty and being part of a dynamic co-operative ecosystem. We are stronger together.



Michelle Cooper-Iversen



Board Members 2022-23

- Michelle Cooper-Iversen, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC
- Ben Hyman, BC Libraries Co-op
- Andrea Harris, Vancity
- Chris Nichols, Wood Shop Workers Co-operative
- Christopher Bodnar, Glen Valley Organic Farm
- James Grieve, Catalyst Strategies Consulting
- Karen Hawes, Interior Savings Credit Union
- Kirsten Forsch, The Co-operators
- Lisa Schmitke, First West Credit Union
- Patrick Nangle, Modo Co-operative

Government Relations

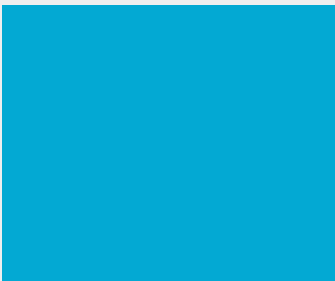
Having secured a \$2 million investment from the Province of British Columbia to support co-op development activities, the BCCA coordinated the *Alliance for Co-operative Development*, a coalition of co-operatives and allies, established a distribution process for this investment, provided regular updates to Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction staff, and participated in the organization of a public announcement of the investment. The public announcement featured then Energy Minister Bruce Ralston and then Parliamentary Secretary Niki Sharma. The fiscal year concluded with the full amount of the investment allocated.

In 2022, the Province of British Columbia launched a review of the Cooperative Association Act, an anticipated multi-year initiative to update and modernize the Act and support the efficient functioning of British Columbia’s co-operatives. In the initial consultation phase, the province invited co-operatives, their members, staff, legal counsel, and others to provide input to identify current issues.

Purpose of the Alliance

- Building community-relevant capacity to apply the co-op model
- Deploying co-op content
- Resourcing staff

See page 7 for more on the *Alliance*.



BCCA made a lengthy submission calling for strengthening the unique aspects of the co-operative model, promoting inclusion of diverse communities in the consultation process, simplifying the language of the Act to increase its usability, and modernizing the legislation by removing irrelevant references, updating practices, and embracing new trends and opportunities. This initial phase resulted in a “Consultation Paper” and second round of consultations.



The BCCA held meetings with a number of elected officials to support the interests of the movement and/or the concerns of individual co-ops, including Attorney General Niki Sharma, Environment Minister George Heyman, Parliamentary Secretary Megan Dykeman, and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Abbotsford Mike de Jong.

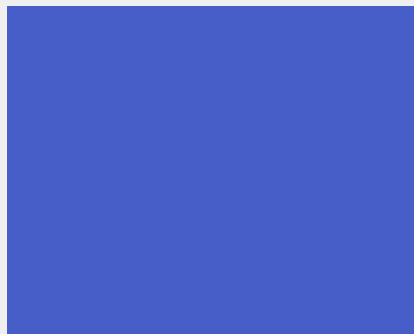
The BCCA worked with consultants at FleishmanHillard-Highroad to refresh the Association’s government relations strategy and define a communications plan.



BCCA Social Statistics



Number of followers on each social media platform. Numbers as of May 12, 2023.



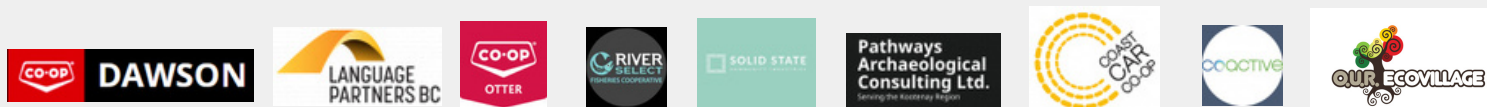
Member Engagement

In the past year, BCCA has worked hard to improve and maintain our existing member services, engage members through events and offerings, and provide them with co-op development support that is customized to their specific needs. BCCA continues to offer its members a variety of services including:

- Member Engagement Workshop
- Governance Workshops
- Co-ops 101 Workshops
- Co-op Meet-ups (now in-person!)
- One-on-one member co-op development services and referrals
- Bi-monthly Equity & Inclusion in Co-ops Community of Practice
- Legal services through the Community & Co-operative Counsel (CCC)
- Principle 6 Deposit Pool

Since our last AGM, we have onboarded and engaged with twelve new and returning members:

- Diamond Springs Water Bottling Co-op
- Pathways Archeological Consulting
- Coast Car Co-op
- Otter Co-op
- Seize the Means of Production Video Co-op
- Oasis Lavenders Cooperative
- Solid State Community Industries
- Language Partners BC
- Dawson Co-operative Union
- CoActive Developments Worker Co-op
- River Select
- O.U.R. Eco Village



Co-op Week 2022

In celebration of Co-op Week in October, BCCA hosted its first in-person event in three years! Co-op Week Brews & Bites brought together co-operators from across the Lower Mainland to enjoy food and drinks, connect, and celebrate the year's co-op successes.



Attended BCCA Co-op Week events

Co-op Meet-Ups

BCCA started to coordinate informal meet-ups in the Okanagan in March 2022. Over the past year, we hosted three meet ups in Vernon, with attendance ranging from six to sixteen people. We thoroughly enjoyed getting to know co-operators who are working in credit unions, housing, website design, counselling, as well as creating social and community spaces. We're looking forward to getting together soon in Vernon, Kelowna, or Penticton!

In November, we hosted an online Ag & Food Co-op Conversation. Twenty-nine folks joined in from Mission, Dawson Creek, Lake Country, Richmond, Quadra Island, Denman Island, and Vancouver to enjoy a Co-ops 101 presentation from Madelyn Read and agriculture co-op case studies, presented by Michelle Tsutsumi, before a Q & A session with co-op developer Elvy Del Bianco.



Co-op Meet-Ups held in June, September, and December

In Our Hands

The first year of the In Our Hands newcomer co-op development program saw some exciting successes in terms of outreach, program development, partnership building, and co-op opportunity development. Over seventy newcomers from across BC and Alberta have joined the program since its launch in 2023, taken part in the In Our Hands Foundations course, and attended community engagement events.

Two newcomer co-operatives have been incorporated since January 2023 - CultureLinks Multilingual Communications Co-operative and the Arabian Beauty Co-operative - with another co-operative, the National Newcomer Professionals Co-op, currently underway.

The In Our Hands program has achieved a positive reputation and following across the local co-operative sector and among newcomer-serving organizations, and we are currently at the stage of exploring future funding to scale the program and advance work in strategic co-op opportunity areas, including foreign credential recognition, financing, and access to retail and production space for newcomer entrepreneurs.

Quotes from project partners

“

It is exciting to see a number of newcomers grouping together and starting to form their cooperative as a result of being participants in the In Our Hands program. It makes us at the Rural Development Network even more excited and hopeful that newcomers, especially in rural communities, will see the benefit of co-ops as a way to improve their socio-economic well-being as we continue our rural outreach.

”

**Elaine Flores, Project Manager,
Rural Development Network**

“

I am truly inspired by the transformative work of In Our Hands. Witnessing the immediate impact of cooperative principles and values on the lives of newcomer women is heartwarming. Many participants had contemplated starting their businesses for years but lacked the confidence to embark on their journey alone. Thankfully, they have now found like-minded members who share their aspirations. It's a testament to the power of collaboration and support, and I am honored to be a part of it.

”

**Serah Gazali, Program and Impact Director
Women's Economic Council**



Co-op Development

The Alliance for Co-operative Development is a coalition of co-op development organizations and allies that is coordinated with the BCCA. Through the Alliance, the co-op development ecology was expanded by scaling the supports available for co-op development and reaching new communities that have faced barriers to applying the co-op model to meet their economic and social needs. In April 2022, the Alliance received a \$2 million investment from the provincial Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction to support this work. Resources were distributed to organizations with a broad mandate, like the BCCA and the Upper Columbia Co-op Council, alongside organizations working to organize the co-op model in their communities, including: the Union Co-op Initiative (unionized sectors), Solid State (newcomers), New Relationship Trust (First Nations communities), the Hua Foundation (Vancouver’s Chinatown), the Young Agrarians (new farmers), and many more.

Alliance Members

- BCCA
 - BC Libraries Co-op
 - Hua Foundation
 - New Relationship Trust
 - Solid State
 - Union Co-op Initiative
 - Upper Columbia Co-op Council
 - Young Agrarians
- & many more

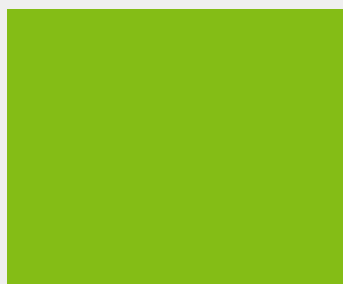
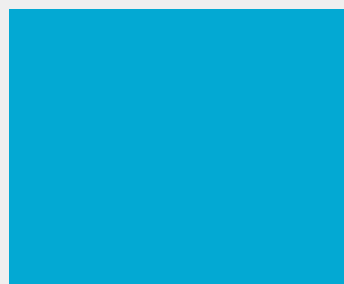
This year, through BCCA's internal co-op development referral process, we were able to respond to and track 90+ inquiries with our new co-op development intake form and tracking system. BCCA's Cultivating Co-ops Guide was shared over 50 times with groups wanting to explore starting a co-op, and over 20 co-op development requests came from BCCA member co-ops seeking assistance, resources and support from staff and BCCA's network, including the Community of Practice.

Co-op Dev Community of Practice

The BC Co-op Developers' Community of Practice has expanded significantly in the past year and featured the incorporation of another co-op developers' worker co-op among its members. It has also added 4 new members, including new mentors and mentees. The mentorship program is yielding great results, with 5 successful mentorships completed this year and 4 currently underway. Many emerging developers are now ready to support groups with incorporation and other development tasks.

Overall, 12 groups were referred out to the Community of Practice, including four BCCA members. Emerging co-ops were supported through their incorporation process and BCCA members were able to work with co-op development experts in various areas, including: modification of existing rules, governance support, business planning, marketing and member engagement strategies.

One emerging co-op that has recently incorporated, Ashcroft Farmers and Artisans Market, said the referral service provided by BCCA "exceeded my expectations. Both the developer and mentee offered different perspectives and helped us to make democratic decisions based on multiple lenses and our present and future goals."



Co-op Education

This year, Co-op Education focused on refining BCCA's Co-ops 101 Workshop tools and delivery. We updated the slide deck to include a more diverse historical account of co-ops around the world, created different iterations of the workshop to suit multiple presentation lengths and different audiences, and piloted these diverse workshop options.



Workshops delivered in 2022-23; five for BCCA members



Attended co-op workshops in 2022-23, including members and staff of existing and developing co-ops, post-secondary students, and the general public.

Co-operate Now Training Intensive

The first in-person Co-operate Now cohort since 2019 gathered in Nelson, BC for 4 days of shared learning and fun. This year's program was co-delivered by the Upper Columbia Co-op Council and welcomed participants from Haida Gwaii, Kelowna, Fernie, Kimberley, Nelson and Vancouver.

One of this cohort's participating groups, Pathways Archeological Consulting, has since incorporated as a co-op and become one of BCCA's newest members!



50/30 Challenge

The 50/30 Challenge, with BCCA and ACCA as Challenge Participants, has had an impactful year. In September 2022, it launched with a Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization and Inclusion in Co-ops Lunch Lab with Freedom Dreams and Lightwork as co-facilitators. 29 people attended from BC, Alberta, Ontario, and Newfoundland.

The Equity & Inclusion in Co-ops Community of Practice has had three sessions to date (October 22, January 23, and March 23) with 42 attendees from various co-ops in BC, Alberta and Newfoundland. The highlighted topics have been on Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, Positionality, Intersectionality, and the Dominant Cultural Narrative.

In 2023, we will continue to host the Equity & Inclusion in Co-ops Community of Practice, curate EDI related content and tools, support the capacity building of internal ACCA and BCCA staff and develop four EDI educational videos that will look at how co-ops are advancing equity and inclusion and moving towards 50% parity for women and 30% participation for equity-deserving/denied groups in leadership and board positions.



“ We’re thrilled to collaborate with the BC Co-op Association on the 'Accelerating Inclusion: Achieving 50-30 in the Co-operative Sector' initiative, supported by the federal government. This partnership strengthens our shared commitment to fostering women’s inclusion in Canada’s cooperative sector, focusing on boards, leadership, and senior management. As a key partner, the BC Co-op Association championed diversity and equality by developing resources and training programs to increase diverse representation. Together, we’re nurturing inclusive communities that celebrate diversity. We’re grateful for this collaboration and look forward to the impact it’ll make on women’s leadership in the cooperative sector. ”

Meaad Alharbi, Regional Manager BC Women's Economic Council



Principle 6 Deposit Pool

Our Principle 6 Deposit Pool does exactly what its name intends it to do - highlights the importance of co-operation among co-operatives. Since April 2021, this deposit pool, which was created in partnership with one of our sustaining members, Vancity, focuses on our members coming together to strengthen our shared impact through co-operation. By pooling participating BCCA member accounts into one large depositor, we are able to offer our Pool members an exclusive premium interest rate of Prime – 1.85%.

Over the last fiscal year, BCCA’s Principle 6 Deposit Pool has grown. We now have 17 participating members and have generated over \$78,000 in interest to be reinvested into our members' co-ops, which allows them to better serve their members and communities.

This is a tangible benefit of BCCA membership. If your co-op is a BCCA member and banks with Vancity, your co-op is eligible for the P6P Deposit Pool. For more Information, please contact BCCA staff at membership@bccca.coop.

BCCA Staff

"Where 2022 saw an unprecedented provincial government investment into BC's co-operative sector, I look forward to the many projects initiated with this capital coming to fruition and positively impacting their communities in 2023."

Ely Del Bianco
Director of Co-operative & Government Relations



"I'm excited to have supported so many fantastic newcomer entrepreneurs with advancing their business ideas and careers through the In Our Hands program this year."

Iva Jankovic
In Our Hands Program Manager



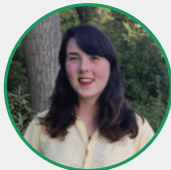
"This year has been an eventful one for BCCA. I'm honoured to share the great work our members are doing and advance the co-operative movement and work with this incredible team"

John Vandenberg
Communications Coordinator



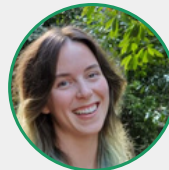
"I am grateful to have connected with many curious individuals eager to learn more about the co-op movement this year."

Madelyn Read
Co-op Education Coordinator



"Every co-op is different, and I am happy to have been able to assist members, along with emerging co-ops by providing co-op development support and resources that meet their unique needs."

Marla Gagnier
Co-op Development Case Manager



"Co-designing offerings with Litzy and Zanna, then sharing them with various groups in support of enacting more equitable and inclusive practices in co-ops, has been such a joy!"

Michelle Tsutsumi
Strategic Convener & Organizer



"Cooperatives are Connective, Originative, Operative and Productive. I am happy to serve the coop sector through BCCA."

Winnie Wang
Finance Coordinator



"I'm excited to see the Equity & Inclusion tools we're creating come alive and be put into practice across co-ops in BC!"

Zanna Ekeroth
DEI Practitioner

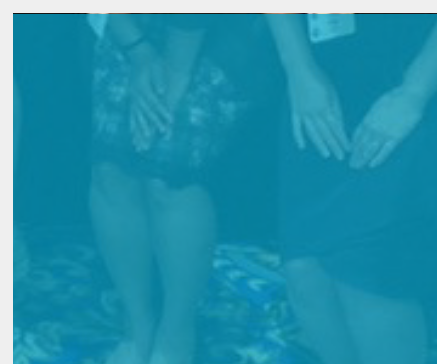
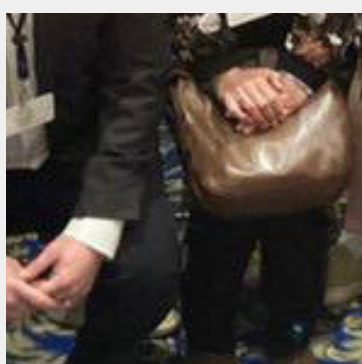
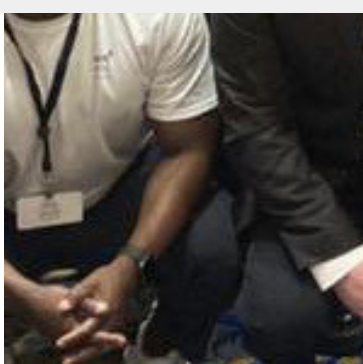
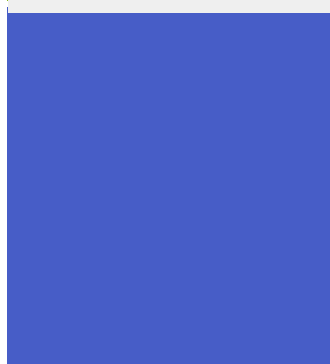
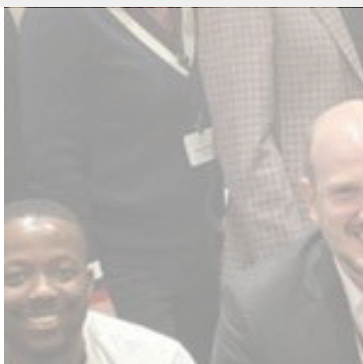


"This year deepened BCCA's capacity to support emerging and evolving co-ops through an expanded Co-operate Now program and a growing Co-op Developers Community of Practice."

Zoë Creighton
Co-op Development Lead



Reflections on the year that was and thoughts about the year ahead



Thank You



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