Indigenous Co-operatives in Canada
CURRENT STATE AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES
co-operatives first

CONSIDER A CO-OP

Business idea? Consider a Co-op.

CO-OP CREATOR
coopcreator.com

GOVERNANCE IN CO-OPERATIVES

COURSE COMPLETED
co-operatives first

- Inspire
- Explore
- Create
- Build
- Thrive
What is a co-operative?
What is a co-operative?

• A versatile business model
• Equitable governance and distribution of benefits
• Connection to community
• Scalable
Types of co-operatives

- Worker
- Consumer
- Housing Co-ops
- Producer/Marketing Co-op
Benefits

- Profits & wealth stay local
- Creates jobs
- Increases community capacity
- Reflects group’s needs
Indigenous Co-operative
Indigenous Co-operatives

- Difficult to define
- Indigenous members or shareholders
- Ratio of membership
- Ad Hoc
co-operatives first

SHARED VALUES

OUTER CIRCLE = Co-operative Values
INNER CIRCLE = Shared Indigenous Values

Self-Help
Co-operatives help people to help themselves

Self-Responsibility
Members responsible for, and answerable to, our future

Love & Truth
Giving back to the community and fulfilling its needs and aspirations are more important than those of the individual.

Wisdom & Humility
Knowledge is shared through generations to ensure continued autonomy.

Reciprocity
Everything is shared.

Honesty & Responsibility
Everyone has an integral role and responsibility in the community.

Social Responsibility
Equal re-distribution of wealth.

Equality & Respect
Each member of the community is equal and respected.

Honesty & Wisdom
Community members choose their leaders based on key principles.

Sustainability
Harvesting, hunting and fishing is done in keeping with sustaining resources for the future.

Equality
No matter how much money a memberourage and the co-op determines the most

History

• 1945 – Kinoosao Fishers Co-op on Reindeer Lake, SK
• 1961 – LaRonge Childcare Co-op Ltd
• 1972 – Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation
• 1995 – Many Nations Co-op Ltd.
Current State

• 2001 – 133 Indigenous Co-ops as suggested by Lou Hammond-Ketilson and Ian MacPherson
• 2012 - Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) identified 123
• 2000 - federal Co-operatives Secretariat estimates 24,000 members of Indigenous co-operatives with sales of approximately $250 million
Current State

- Fishing and Trapping
- Financial Services
- Wholesale and Distribution
- Indigenous Co-ops and Retail
- Agriculture
- Utilities and community services
- Food Security
- Art Marketing
- Renewable Energy
Indigenous Co-operatives at Work
Old Crow Co-op

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0coiDDXVPs8
Northern Star Worker Co-op

- First Nation and Metis women in Winnipeg
- Started sewing together in a resource centre
- Collaborate craftsmanship and workplace culture
- Online marketing
Co-operatives First Projects
First Nations Technical Services Co-op

- Initiated by the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
- Created in response to the federal government recommendations of provincial fire, housing and infrastructure standards followed on reserve
- Membership includes a number of tribal councils and individual nations
First Nations Technical Services Co-op

- Started with providing housing inspections for member nations
- Co-operatives First helped revise bylaws and provide support for the first AGM
Manitoba Commercial Fishing

- Concerned of the end of the monopoly held by the Freshwater Fish Corporation
- Northern fishers are predominately Metis and First Nation
Turtle Island Commercial Fishers Co-op

- Over 100 fishers met in Winnipeg to address the concerns of the end of the monopoly
- Steering committee formed to include regional representation
- Turtle Island Commercial Fishers has received confirmation of Incorporation
The Village of Cumberland House
Ministik Co-op

- Limited access to fresh foods
- Northern Store is the local grocer
- Community members identified the need for a good food box program and gathering space instead of a traditional retail store
Food Forest and Learning Centre

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=food+forest+cooperatives+first
How we’re helping
Support for co-operatives

- Online governance course
- Resource website
- Workshops and training
- Policy development and reviews
- Business Plan Support
Thank You!
Questions?
Stay in touch

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Co-operatives First

• https://www.thebackroaddiaries.ca/
• https://cooperativesfirst.com/
• https://cooperativesfirst.com/common-share-podcast/
Next steps

- Form a steering committee
- Initial research
- Incorporate
- Business planning
- Finance
- Build
Financing your co-op

- Common shares:
  - Usually attached to voting rights
  - Lower cost to attract members

- Preferred shares:
  - Typically issued to investors
  - Rights need to be defined
  - Return on investment is pre-determined

- Loans