Report on the
Global Innovation Co-op Summit Workshops
Montréal, September 27-29, 2023

Together we LEAD   **Let's get CIRCULAR**   **Living DIGITAL**
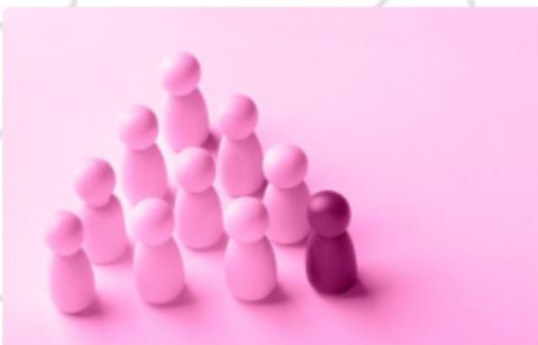
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Setting the Context and Expressing Gratitude

The inception of the Global Innovation Coop Summit can be attributed to the recurring requests of cooperatives and mutuals, seeking a dedicated platform for the exploration of innovative ideas in the realms of technology, social issues, management, governance, business development, and the sharing of best practices. It also aimed to provide insights into the trends shaping business practices within this model.

Currently in its second in-person edition, the inaugural event in 2022 took place at the premises of Crédit Agricole, where participants and panelists emphatically underscored the imperative to take action in the domains of environmental sustainability and the achievement of sustainable development goals. To address these needs, an advisory committee comprising cooperatives and organizations invested in the cooperative model was established. Their role was to guide the GICS team in making well-informed choices regarding relevant subjects for cooperatives and mutuals.

During these discussions, it was unanimously agreed upon that for the upcoming edition:

- Participants should depart with a "key takeaway" allowing them, at their discretion, to disseminate discussions within their own networks of cooperatives and mutuals, providing them with an international perspective on issues, strategies, and potential actions.
- The format should promote heightened engagement and interaction between panelists and participants during plenary sessions.
- It should also encourage exchanges among participants, which led to the conception of workshops that facilitated the production of this report.

Under the theme " Act now for a circular and digital future, the cooperators way," GICS 2023, hosted by the Institut international des coopératives Alphonse-et-Dorimène-Desjardins of HEC, proved to be a resounding success, not only in terms of participation – the number of participants tripled, with 363 attendees from 35 different countries – but also in terms of the range of activities available: 4 interviews, 6 speakers, 4 panels to initiate discussions, and 12 thematic workshops for in-depth exploration of various subjects.

Our first thanks go to our **advisory group**, who have believed in us since the beginning of this GICS adventure and have guided us towards the right choices of themes for cooperatives and mutuals. They are: Agnès Mathis, Director of Coop Europe, France; Alexandra Wilson, President of the Advisory Group on Cooperative Identity of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), Canada; Ana Aguirre, Co-Founder and Worker-Owner, Tazebaez Co-op, President of the ICA Youth Committee, Spain; Andrea Renaud, Director of Cooperative Affairs, Sillio Groupe Coopératif, Canada; Balu Iyer, Director ICA Asia Pacific, India; Greg Dinsdale, President & CEO of LBMX Inc, Canada; Ilana Gotz, Coordinator of EURICE and ICBEC, Italy; Marjaana Saarikoski, Director of Cooperative Affairs and Partnerships at SOK Corporation, Finland; Marie-Josée Paquette, General Director of the Quebec Cooperative and Mutualism Council, Canada; Myriam Demers, Senior Director of Culture and Cooperation at Desjardins Movement, Canada; Phil Posonby, CEO of Midcounties, United Kingdom; Violetta Nafpaktiti, Managing Director of DotCoop, United Kingdom.

We would like to thank the **scientific committee** of the conference, Luc Audebrand, Full Professor, Laval University, Canada; Justine Ballon, Assistant Professor, Department of Management, HEC Montreal, Canada; Karen Miner, General Manager, International Centre for Co-operative Management, Saint Mary's University, Canada; Sonja Novkovic, Professor, Academic Director, International Centre for Co-operative Management, Saint Mary's

Report Structure

This is a report, not an in-depth analysis of everything that was said. Its intent is to remain neutral, enabling readers to formulate their own conclusions. However, upon reviewing what has been reported, it becomes evident that there are notable similarities among the workshops within each major theme: " Let's get circular," "Living Digital," and "Together we Lead." These themes constitute the three core chapters of the report.

Each chapter commences with a "Workshop Convergences" that consolidates the observed similarities from the four workshops comprising each chapter. Subsequently, you will find "Workshop Notes," presenting the identified challenges, levers, and intercooperation practices. These notes are followed by a "Summary" that highlights the key elements. Finally, each chapter includes a "Food for Thought" section, derived from an idea or concept that surfaced during the workshop, and at times, a "Good to Know" section, which offers definitions and references for a deeper understanding of the topic discussed in the workshop.

Let's get CIRCULAR
Reports of the interactive workshops conducted with participants

Workshop Convergences

Challenges Across Cooperative Contexts:
Challenges vary depending on cultural differences, consumption patterns, limited recognition of cooperatives, resource constraints, and resistance to the adoption of circular principles. The inherent tension between achieving impact and pursuing growth further complicates the operations of cooperative enterprises.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges:
Identified strategies include recognizing the importance of collaborative work, reallocating profits toward collective objectives, influencing policies through education and advocacy, and prioritizing ethics and regulation in technology adoption. Harnessing technology is crucial for community-building and promoting the digital transition.

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGY - BEST PRACTICE:
Promoting the sharing of knowledge, activating resources, and exchanging ideas among diverse cooperative entities is highlighted. This involves forming alliances, sharing data to facilitate circular economy practices, and fostering close collaboration among cooperatives.

Overall, these conclusions underscore the pivotal role of cooperatives in driving the transition towards a circular economy and achieving the SDGs. By addressing challenges, implementing strategic approaches, and actively engaging in intercooperation, cooperatives can maximize their impact, promote sustainability, and advocate for a circular and equitable future.

Workshop Circular business models for cooperatives

11:30	**Circular business models for cooperatives:** This session reviews all circularity strategies and the business model of cooperatives in a circular economy. Based on a pioneering research project in Quebec, we discuss the cartography of cooperative business models, and introduce tools for advancing circularity within a cooperative but also between cooperatives. How can these tools help cooperatives? How do they support inter-cooperation?
Facilitator	**Rafael Ziegler**, Ph. D. Director, Institut international des coopératives Alphonse-et-Dorimène-Desjardins de HEC Montréal, Canada
Panelists	**Gaëlle Généreux**, Project Manager TIESS, Canada **Cindy Vaucher**, Co-founder of Retournzy - returnable containers sharing service for food service, Canada **Akinori Suzuki**, Head of Environmental Promotion Group, Co-op Sapporo, Japan

Notes taken during the workshop

CHALLENGES:

Consumption culture
- Consumption culture presents a challenge, for example because it puts the focus on the individual; Market pressure, external perception, and valuation pose challenges.
- Competition spirit and lack of cooperation require transformation.
- Instead, there is a danger of addressing symptoms rather than root causes.
- Awareness, resistance to change, and education need to be addressed (consumption culture creates resistances to change in the minds).
- Need for better awareness and more strategic redistribution of wealth.
- Lacking awareness of the poorer parts of the world (where our "garbage" often ends up) and of limits to resources.

Recognition of cooperatives in the (circular) economy
- Market-focused circular economy presents challenges; the social aspect of the circular economy is often not recognized (for example work insertion and the labour done within companies and at home) requires special attention. Transitioning from the economic to the social represents a significant challenge.
- Addressing social issues in the circular economy requires education and involvement of young people.
- Critical examination of governance is needed.
- Indicators and prices do not reflect the full (social and environmental) costs.

For cooperators, who might often work in small, resource-deprived organizations adding "circularity" might simply be an added "impossible" demand and "charge mental"
- Cultural practices and mentalities are challenging to change, posing obstacles to transformation.
- Lack of knowledge about cooperative network resources is a challenge.

For bigger cooperators there might be a lacking maturity of coop value chains and markets (making inter-cooperation difficult)

Political support
- Current policies lack solidarity (and recognition of coops in policies, including more dedicated support).
- Tension between scaling (for impact) and growth requires appropriate measurement, accompaniment and support.

LEVERS:
- Cooperatives provide meaningful, even fundamental, products (e.g. addressing needs such as housing, food . . .).
- Cooperatives have a collective structure (e.g., going beyond the individualism that makes it appear to meaningful action is not possible/has any impact).
    - Reinvest generated surpluses.
    - Pool capital, combining expertise and financial resources (e.g., International Summit of Cooperatives, 2012).
    - Facilitate access to capital to encourage cooperation and intercooperation (C2C), fostering an ecosystem of available data, research, and examples.
- Cooperatives as a movement can
    - mobilize toward a common goal (e.g., beyond individual or even organizational goals only).
    - Lobby (e.g., via federations/big coops) to establish a favorable legislative and financial framework; Implement regulations to combat the comfort of habits.
    - Promote cooperative education and new cooperative values (change the language from economic growth to economic transformation); ; Integrate technology in a healthy way into education and partner growth, facilitating communication; diversify skills, encourage mutual exchange, and cooperation; Promote cooperative education and ongoing training in good governance and change management.
    - Promote coop to coop intercooperation/circular ecosystem; Create platforms for the circular economy and develop cooperative alliances; Create signaling systems to guide actions; Establish mechanisms, processes, and programs that promote platform sharing and encourage different thinking.
    - Foster a sense of community.
    - Use opportunities to change paradigms.

- The important role of young cooperators in bringing new ideas, but also recognition of generational change and role of the older generation.

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGY - BEST PRACTICE:
- Build unusual alliances with a minimal but shared principles to foster engagement and agreement.
    - work coop to coop but also across sectors (example housing coops with agricultural coop); build alliances, create bridges, and provide shared spaces, being open to other cooperatives.
    - Work not only with cooperatives but also with external partners.
    - Establish a system allowing experimentation without financial penalties, encouraging innovation.
    - Encourage more "coopetition" incentives through stimulating collaborative projects.
    - Utilize the unique capabilities of each cooperative in pursuing circularity goals, highlighting the promotion and value of each.

- Data
    - Make data available and share them.
    - Design healthy data collaboration strategies to ensure transparent and responsible information management.

- Foster learning sharing through platforms like the PortailCoop/Coop Portal to strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Develop a C2C ecosystem with specialized expertise in geolocation, emphasizing emission reduction.

- Communication: Walk the talk and talk the walk:
    - implementing commitments to enhance credibility, but also communicate this and talk about.
    - Intensify educational efforts, making the government the primary entity responsible for education, incentivization, and capitalization to support a C2C ecosystem. This includes sharing data on waste and resource transformation, contributing to achieving a circular economy.

Summary

The **challenges** identified in the cooperative context encompass a variety of issues. They start with the consumption culture that individualizes the challenge, fosters a culture of competition and throwaway consumer goods, and yields a focus on symptoms rather than root causes. In addition, the role and social labor of cooperatives are often not recognized due to a focus on technology in the prevailing circular economy discourse (e.g., lacking recognition of human labour, and health issues, in recycling centres both here and in the Global South and its "garbage pickers"; or of gendered consumption labour such as recycling work done in the private sphere and in organizations). For cooperators, who might often work in small, resource-deprived organizations adding "circularity" might simply be an added "impossible" demand and "charge mental." For bigger cooperators there might be a lacking maturity of coop value chains and markets (making inter-cooperation difficult). Finally, current policies lack solidarity (and recognition of coops in policies, including more dedicated support; as well as the elimination of subsidies for big corporate players). The tension between scaling (for impact) and growth demands requires appropriate measurement, accompaniment, and support to bring out the true option of coops and cooperative networks.

To overcome these challenges, several **levers** are identified. They include, first, a recognition of the meaning of work and cooperation, which is easily achieved for cooperatives that are set up in response to needs. Second the collective structure of cooperatives allows them to reinvest profits with a view to purpose to pursue collective goals and use education, peer exchange, and lobbying to influence policy and create cooperative ecosystems. Generational change and young cooperators are also important to mention here.

Best practices for intercooperation include building unusual alliances between cooperators, also from different sectors, but built on coop principles, but also alliances with other types of organizations; to collect data and share them to enable data platforms and experimentation along and across value chains; To ensure that cooperatives really maximize in practice the resonance of coop principles with circular economy, but also that they communicate this (walk the talk, and talk the walk).

Food for thought on the circular economy and degrowth or ecological economy

The concepts of the circular economy and degrowth both address the need for a more sustainable approach to consumption and production. However, the prevailing circular economy discourse differs significantly from degrowth:

Circular Economy:

In the dominant circular economy discourse, the emphasis is on designing systems that minimize waste and promote the continuous use, recycling, and regeneration of resources. The focus is on closing loops and creating a more efficient system where materials are reused, refurbished, remanufactured, and recycled.

The main goal of the circular economy is often formulated in the context of sustainable growth. It views waste as a potential resource and an opportunity for economic development. The aim is to decouple economic growth from the depletion of finite resources and environmental degradation. The democratic or social governance of organizations and the economy tends to be ignored or given secondary attention.

Degrowth:

Degrowth questions the idea of continuous economic growth as a necessity. It proposes a deliberate reduction in overall consumption and production to achieve a more sustainable and equitable society. It involves rethinking the social orientation of GDP growth towards well-being, social justice, and ecological sustainability.

The main goal of degrowth is to create a society that operates within the ecological limits of the planet, recognizing that perpetual growth is unsustainable. It advocates for reducing economic activities to ensure a balance with the environment, even if it means a decrease in traditional measures of economic production.

Key Differences:

- The circular economy, in the dominating discourse, maintains a growth-oriented perspective, where sustainable practices support economic growth, whereas degrowth questions the idea of continuous growth and emphasizes the need to reduce economies for ecological sustainability (circular economy).

- While both approaches aim to reduce waste and demand for raw materials, the circular economy often adheres to the idea of a circular metabolism to support economic growth, while degrowth calls for an intentional reduction in the overall metabolic rate of society.

- In summary, the key distinction lies in the ultimate goal and perspective on growth. The circular economy, as understood in mainstream discourse, aims to create sustainable growth through circular practices, while degrowth questions the need for growth itself to achieve a more sustainable and equitable society.

- Can we embrace degrowth while improving people's quality of life?

- The concept of "degrowth" does not necessarily mean an absolute reduction in all economic activities but rather questions the continual pursuit of economic growth as the primary goal. The concept of degrowth proposes a reorientation of economic priorities toward sustainability, social equity, and quality of life rather than quantitative growth.

- Here are some key ideas on the possibility of achieving economic degrowth while improving quality of life:

- Reorientation of Goals: Degrowth involves a fundamental shift in how we measure progress. Rather than solely focusing on GDP growth, the emphasis is on more holistic indicators such as well-being, health, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

- Less Environmental Stress: By reducing dependence on natural resources and adopting sustainable modes of production and consumption, degrowth can contribute to alleviating environmental stress, which, in the long term, can improve quality of life by preserving ecosystems.

- Reduction of Inequalities: Degrowth can be designed to promote a more equitable distribution of resources and social benefits. This can help reduce economic inequalities and improve the quality of life for a larger portion of the population.

- Focus on Basic Needs: Instead of stimulating the production of superfluous goods, degrowth encourages meeting the essential needs of the population. This can translate into an improvement in the quality of life by focusing on health, education, housing, and other fundamental aspects.

- Social Well-being: By promoting lifestyles centered on well-being rather than material consumption, degrowth can create societies where happiness, mental health, and social relationships are central goals.

It is important to note that the successful implementation of degrowth requires careful consideration, appropriate policies, and collective commitment. It does not necessarily imply a widespread decline in quality of life but rather a realignment of values and priorities to create more sustainable and fulfilling societies.

In between the mainstream conception of circularity as green growth and radical degrowth that is even against markets, the cooperative movement has a critical role to play:

- As democratic organizations, cooperatives can bring in and substantiate the "governance" and "social" dimensions of circular economy with a concern for labor rights, health issues and so forth.

- As enterprises, cooperatives can adopt and test circular strategies in a way that is driven by member interests (rather than by interests of investors).

Indeed, we see new cooperatives being founded with "circularity" as a value in their mission; and we see established coops experimenting with and adopting circularity strategies.

Workshop Community energy

11:30	**Community energy:** Renewable energy is rapidly gaining popularity worldwide and is frequently the preferred energy source in communities with the resources and shared commitment to reduce energy costs and decrease reliance on fossil fuels. Cooperatives can play a strong role in community-owned energy initiatives and be impactful contributors to the circular economy -- both in developed nations and emerging economies. Learn how cooperatives can empower communities and municipalities by creating wealth sustainably and strengthening their economies. In what ways are cooperatives innovators in this space? Can the cooperative model be the catalyst for long-term sustainable energy use? What are the challenges?
Facilitator	**Zuraidah Hoffman**, Award winning storyteller and producer, expert of communication and cooperative, United-States.
Panelists	**Michaela Cryer**, Head of Younity, Midcounties, United Kingdom **Dan Waddle**, Senior VP, NRECA International, United-States **Thomas Bauwens**, Assistant Professor of Collective action for Sustainability | ERC grantee, Netherlands

Notes taken during the workshop

CHALLENGES:
- Financial challenges, including capitalization, implementation costs, and profitability, are inextricably linked to political considerations and the notion that time equals money.
- Challenges such as community membership, engagement, and member connection are crucial elements directly impacting the success of cooperatives.
- Coordination among stakeholders, the management of complex regulations, and the evaluation of operational scale are interdependent aspects.
- Decision-making processes, the issue of acceptability, and managing mistrust are essential dimensions that require a balanced approach.
- Access to Financing and Government Support:
- Overcoming the challenge of access to financing, including the real costs of renewable energies, can be facilitated by adequate government support.
- Individuals' resistance to renewable energies and the absence of a favorable legal environment are obstacles that require specific strategies.

LEVERS:
- Collective action through a lobbying and advocacy agency, along with inspiration drawn from previous successes, represents complementary approaches.
- Training, communication, and strengthening the knowledge of elected officials are essential, as is the use of buildings, land, and available assets, with a focus on community ownership.
- Mutualization of expertise services among cooperatives at the local level, combined with effective coordination, strengthens synergy between initiatives.
- Local energy markets, aggregated demand, and support from local administrations, with institutional decentralization, are crucial levers for sustainable development.
- The cooperative enterprise, by inspiring trust and promoting the inclusion of stakeholders, relies on strong cooperative values.
- Energy aggregation, coupled with government support through lobbying, forms an integrated strategy.

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGIES:
- Shared responsibility among cooperatives, emphasizing the importance of working together toward common goals.
- Establishment of federations, akin to France's "énergie partagée," to facilitate knowledge sharing, support the emergence of new initiatives, and influence regulatory frameworks through lobbying.
- Promotion of awareness of interoperation, encouraging cooperatives to collaborate in the field of energy and beyond.
- Practice of aggregated purchasing by cooperatives, thereby reinforcing operational efficiency through consolidating needs.
- Holistic mutualization of resources, combining skills and information, while considering all energy aspects, from production to consumption and efficiency.
- Public awareness of the benefits of community energy to increase its accessibility.
- Recognition and utilization of an existing natural model, ready to use. Encouragement of resource and knowledge sharing among cooperatives.
- Practice of forming umbrella organizations, such as federations or summits, to foster closer cooperation between cooperatives.

Summary

Cooperative energy initiatives face complex **challenges**, particularly on the financial front, closely intertwined with political aspects and time pressures. To ensure their success, crucial elements such as community membership, engagement, stakeholder coordination, regulatory management, and the evaluation of operational scale are of paramount importance. Obstacles such as individual resistance to renewable energies and the lack of a favorable legal framework demand specific approaches.

Various strategic **levers** emerge as essential catalysts to enhance the sustainability of cooperative energy ventures. Collective action, inspiration, skill development, resource pooling, collaboration in local energy markets, and the promotion of cooperative enterprises are means to overcome challenges. An integrated strategy combines energy aggregation with government support through lobbying.

In the realm of **best practices for intercooperation**, sharing responsibilities, the establishment of federations influencing regulatory frameworks, awareness of interoperation, aggregated purchasing by cooperatives, holistic resource pooling, public awareness, and the formation of umbrella organizations emerge as crucial initiatives. These strategies foster close cooperation among cooperatives, thereby maximizing their efficiency and success.

Food for thought on addressing two obstacles

1.Individual Resistance to Renewable Energies:

- Awareness Campaigns: Develop campaigns highlighting the benefits of renewable energies, emphasizing their positive impacts on the environment, long-term savings, and local benefits.

- Community Education: Organize educational programs within communities to dispel misconceptions about renewable energies and highlight their contributions to sustainability.

- Testimonials and Local Success Stories: Showcase testimonials and successful examples of renewable energy projects within the community to make these initiatives tangible and accessible.

2. Lack of a Favorable Legal Framework:

- Lobbying and Advocacy: Establish lobbying teams to promote favorable energy policies, collaborate with other stakeholders to influence policy decisions.

- Collaboration with Local Authorities: Establish partnerships and close collaboration with local authorities, integrating cooperatives into discussions on the development of local energy policies.

- Legal Education: Provide legal education to cooperative members so they understand legal issues and can contribute knowledgeably to policy discussions.

- Participation in Business Networks: Engage in local and national business networks to strengthen the collective voice and increase political influence for a legal framework conducive to renewable energies.

- Public Consultations: Actively participate in public consultations on energy policies to express the needs and perspectives of cooperatives.

Workshop Circular housing the cooperative way

11:30	**Circular housing the cooperative way:** What is causing the global housing crisis and how can circular economics and cooperation help fix it? Adequate housing is a basic need and a human right, and yet nearly 1.5 billion people are affected by a global shortage of adequate and affordable housing. In most countries, the cost of housing is growing faster than incomes with over one hundred million people experiencing homelessness every day. Furthermore, construction practices and housing use contribute to carbon emissions and unsustainable resource extraction. Circular economics and cooperation can help address these challenges by promoting sustainable building practices, reducing waste, and increasing access to affordable housing. The panel aims to explore solutions to these obstacles through policy, finance, industry, and end-user perspectives. Stretch your thinking and join this robust dialogue on housing challenges, opportunities, and solutions.
Facilitator	**Tim Ross,** Executive Director, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada), Canada
Panelists	**Julie LaPalme,** Secretary-General, Cooperative Housing International, Belgium **Annie Levasseur,** Professor at École de technologie supérieure; Chair holder of the Canada Research Chair in Measuring the Impact of Human Activities on Climate Change; Scientific Director of CIRIEC Canada **Nadine Leblanc,** Senior Vice-President of Policy, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Notes taken during the workshop

CHALLENGES:
- A high number of deteriorated housing units.
- Limited size and expansion of cooperatives.
- Climate justice: addressing the cost of green initiatives.
- Massive housing needs and housing crisis facing high construction costs.
- Program complexity, lack of adaptation, delays compromising affordability.
- Knowledge sharing within the community of practice.
- Construction cost, delays, materials.
- Policy barriers and government advocacy.
- Old buildings and degraded condition.
- Cheap buildings and the need to build quickly (vs circular economy).
- Complexity of financing models.
- Challenges of attracting new workers.

LEVERS:
- Real estate portfolio acquisition.
- Right to housing.
- Adapting programs to the realities of the field and increased understanding by decision-makers of the cooperative model.
- Scaling up, moving from small to large cooperative projects.
- Partnership.
- Education and promotion.
- Combining circularity and cooperatives to train and attract new workers.

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGIES—BEST PRACTICE:
- Collaboration among stakeholders to propose universal designs.
- Spaces for sharing best practices.
- Regional and national groupings supporting cooperative initiatives.
- Example of "District Energy" (highly innovative).

Summary

Housing cooperatives face challenges such as deteriorated housing, limited dimensions, and issues related to climate justice.

To overcome these obstacles, levers such as real estate portfolio acquisition, the right to housing, and scaling up to larger cooperative projects are essential.

Intercooperation strategies recommend universal collaboration among stakeholders, spaces for exchange of best practices, and regional and national groupings to support cooperative initiatives. The innovative example of *District Energy** illustrates a particularly innovative practice.

*District Energy, also called low-carbon thermal networks. These are systems that distribute thermal energy to multiple buildings in an area or neighborhood. These systems typically consist of a heating and cooling center, as well as a thermal network of pipelines connected to a group of buildings.

Food for thought on the "district energy" model

Promoting the example of district energy in the context of cooperative initiatives offers several advantages:

- Showcase of Innovation: District energy represents an innovative and forward-thinking approach to energy solutions. Highlighting such examples can position cooperative initiatives as leaders in adopting cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices.

- Source of Inspiration for Collaboration: District energy typically involves collaboration among various stakeholders. By highlighting this example, cooperatives can inspire similar collaborative efforts within their own initiatives, fostering partnerships for shared success.

- Demonstration of Sustainable Practices: District energy systems are often designed with a focus on sustainability. Promoting this example allows cooperatives to emphasize their commitment to environmentally friendly practices, aligning with the growing global emphasis on sustainability.

- Efficiency and Cost Savings: District energy systems are known for their efficiency and potential cost savings. This can be particularly attractive for cooperatives facing challenges related to construction costs and the need for affordable housing solutions.

- Community Impact: Energy and district initiatives often have positive impacts on the communities they serve. By showcasing such projects, cooperatives can highlight their commitment to community well-being and present tangible benefits that resonate with stakeholders.

- Learning Opportunity: The district energy example offers a valuable learning opportunity for other cooperatives. Sharing successes, challenges, and lessons learned can contribute to a collective knowledge base beneficial to the entire cooperative movement.

In summary, promoting the district energy example serves as a strategic approach to position cooperative initiatives as innovative, environmentally conscious, and community-centered entities. This provides a tangible illustration of successful collaboration and sustainable practices that can inspire and guide similar efforts in the cooperative sector.

Workshop One Health - the positive circle

11:30	**One Health - The positive circle:** The Covid epidemic has demonstrated that human health is not limited to medical care in the event of illness. Experience shows that the state of health is influenced by external factors. There is their economic and financial situation (ecohealth) but also environmental factors such as interactions with animals or the quality of plant products consumed (one health). Based on examples, the workshop will aim to open avenues for reflection and action in the context of the circular economy so as not to neglect health issues.
Facilitator	**Jean-Louis Bancel,** Co-founder of Global Innovation Coop Summit, France
Panelists	• **Johanne Saint-Charles,** Professor of Communication, Université du Québec à Montreal, Director of the Institut Santé et société and of the WHO/PAHO Collaborating Centre on Occupational and Environmental Health, Canada • **Mathias Savignac,** President, MGEN Group, France

Notes taken during the workshop

ISSUES:
- Ignorance of the poverty cycle, not person-centered.
- Time efficiency.
- Accessibility to an advanced, personal, holistic educational approach.
- Education/access to information.
- Expanded health access (biomedical, living environment).
- Transitions around health (digital, among others).
- Capitalism/financing.
- Diversity of needs (gender, race, silos, lack of time spent with patients).
- Not enough practitioners.

LEVERS:
- Bottom-up localized, responsive, and acceptable approach for communities.
- Decentralized systems organized towards democratic structures.
- Intercooperation.
- Membership mobilization.
- Delivery, telemedicine.
- Harnessing the collective power of individuals, the community. Intercooperation for research.

BEST PRACTICES:
- Intersectional holistic approach for democratic healthcare, collaboratively working through cooperation.
- Engaging in discussions with the government to break the pharmaceutical monopoly (for example, health cooperatives in Western Canada own their pharmacy).
- Knowledge sharing + accessibility of paid practitioners.
- This consolidation highlights common challenges, potentially applicable levers, and suggested best practices to address complex integrated health issues and cooperation in the healthcare field.

Summary

The text identifies major **challenges** in the healthcare field, such as ignorance of the poverty cycle, time efficiency, and accessibility to an advanced educational approach. These issues also include aspects such as education, expanded health access, digital transitions, issues related to capitalism and financing, and a lack of diversity in medical services.

In response to these challenges, **levers** such as a bottom-up localized approach, decentralized systems, intercooperation, and membership mobilization are suggested.

Best practices include an intersectional holistic approach for democratic healthcare, government engagement to break the pharmaceutical monopoly, and knowledge sharing with the accessibility of paid practitioners.

This synthesis highlights an integrated approach to address these complex health issues.

Food for thought on holistic approach

The One Health approach is a concept that recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. For cooperatives, adopting an integrated and holistic approach to One Health could involve several aspects:

- Multisectoral Collaboration: Cooperatives should collaborate with stakeholders in human, animal, and environmental health. This could involve partnerships with public health organizations, veterinarians, environmental experts, etc. Collaboration between these different sectors would better understand and address health issues as a whole.

- Integrated Surveillance: Conduct integrated surveillance of diseases and associated environmental factors. This may include monitoring emerging diseases that affect both animals and humans, as well as monitoring environmental quality.

- Training and Awareness: Cooperatives can play a crucial role in raising awareness and training community members, farmworkers, veterinarians, etc., about the links between human, animal, and environmental health. This can contribute to a better understanding of risks and sustainable practices.

- Sustainable Agricultural Practices: Encourage sustainable agricultural practices that take into account the impact on human, animal, and environmental health. This could include promoting agroecology, sustainable management of agricultural waste, etc.

- Antimicrobial Management: Implement policies and practices for the responsible use of antimicrobials in agriculture. Antimicrobial resistance is a major issue related to human and animal health, and an integrated approach is essential to address it.

- Biodiversity Promotion: Encourage biodiversity conservation and the preservation of natural ecosystems. Human health is closely linked to ecosystem health, and biodiversity preservation is crucial for maintaining a balanced environment.

- Waste Management: Adopt waste management practices that reduce risks to human and animal health. This could include safe management of agricultural waste and the promotion of proper waste disposal.

- Continuous Research and Monitoring: Support continuous research on the interactions between human, animal, and environmental health. Ongoing monitoring of developments in these areas is essential for a rapid response to emerging threats.

By adopting an integrated One Health approach, cooperatives can contribute significantly to promoting a more resilient, sustainable, and healthier society. This requires a long-term vision and close collaboration with various partners and stakeholders.

Food for thought on how to promote equity in the one health program through the practices of cooperatives and mutuals

Cooperatives and mutuals can enhance the social dimension of equity in their practices through the following actions:

- Equity in healthcare: Healthcare cooperatives can establish policies for equitable access to healthcare services. They can also provide affordable healthcare services in disadvantaged regions.

- Health inequalities: Cooperatives can commit to reducing health inequalities by offering targeted health programs for the most vulnerable populations. They can also promote health awareness initiatives to address disparities.

- Access to resources: Agricultural cooperatives can play a role in ensuring that natural resources, such as farmland, are managed fairly and sustainably. They can support equitable access to clean water in communities.

- Impact on vulnerable communities: Cooperatives can focus on the specific needs of vulnerable communities by developing health programs tailored to their unique challenges. They can also work closely with local organizations to better understand and address specific health risks.

- Intersectoral collaboration: Cooperatives can promote collaboration between healthcare, agriculture, environment, and other sectors for a holistic approach to health. They can establish partnerships with organizations working in these sectors to maximize impact.

- Education and awareness: Cooperatives can play a key role in public health education and awareness. They can organize educational programs and awareness campaigns within communities, with a focus on vulnerable groups.

- Community participation: Cooperatives can encourage active community participation in decision-making and the implementation of health programs. They can organize community meetings and consultations to ensure members' voices are heard.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Cooperatives can align their activities with the SDGs, especially SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). They can contribute to WHO's goals by working on indicators related to these SDGs.

By adopting these actions, cooperatives and mutuals can play a significant role in promoting equity in healthcare, reducing health inequalities, ensuring fair access to resources, and improving the health of vulnerable communities. They thereby contribute to the achievement of the WHO's One Health program objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Living DIGITAL
Reports of the interactive workshops conducted with participants

Workshop Convergences

Digital Challenges Across Cooperative Contexts:

Cooperatives encounter complex challenges related to managing legitimacy, establishing effective working frameworks, and handling relationships among management, consumer services, and governance. Engagement and participation are essential, but disengagement remains a challenge. Additionally, addressing digital tools requires clear objectives, addressing inequalities, and preparing for change.

Levers to Overcome Digital Challenges:

Strategic levers have been identified to tackle these challenges, including adapting and effectively using digital tools, peer learning, technology and governance education, and a focus on ethics and regulation. Integrating technologies, including AI, to foster digital transition is crucial for cooperatives.

Best Practices for Digital Intercooperation:

Effective intercooperation practices emphasize knowledge sharing, resource activation, and the sharing of ideas among various cooperative structures. Building alliances and promoting data sharing facilitate the transition to a digitalized environment. Close collaboration among cooperatives is vital for enhancing digital efficiency and success.

Collectively, these insights underscore the importance of addressing digitalization and AI challenges within cooperatives to promote the responsible and equitable use of technology. By leveraging these strategic levers and intercooperation practices, cooperatives can maximize their digital impact, empower their members, and adapt to the ever-evolving digital landscape.

Workshop Digital coop governance

10:45	**Digital Coop Governance**: this session discusses the relationships and tensions between established cooperative governance models, and emerging governance models relying on digital technologies. Collaborative governance, blockchain-based DAOs and open source collectives offer inspiring models of collective organization, relatively emancipated from traditional organization structures, and which generally emerge beyond the cooperative movement's boundaries. What are the similarities and differences between emerging, digital-based governance models and established cooperative governance models? What are the perceived or verified areas of complementarities and tensions among both streams? How could cooperative governance benefit from such experimentations, and vice versa?
Facilitator	**Myriam Michaud,** PhD, management & gouvernance; coopératives & économie sociale, TELUQ, Canada
Panelists	• **Nadine Groulx**, President of the board Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité, Director of the Board of Desjardins Group, Canada • **Louis Cousin**, Director of Operations, Startin'blox, France

Notes taken during the workshop

CHALLENGES:
- Legitimacy towards members.
- Working framework.
- Management versus consumer services versus governance.
- Disengagement and guarantees of deep participation.
- Access and adoption of technology.
- Understanding what good governance is.
- Interpretation—human dimension in our participation.
- Specify objectives—survey.
- How to choose virtual digital tools? How to get the most out of it, especially internationally and in Africa?
- The distinction between individual and collective data to be shared.
- Change management and governance preparation.
- Digital inequalities.

LEVERS:
- Frequency, adapted, personalized.
- Good tools well used in preparing the transformation of the governance model.
- Peer learning (mentoring by models).
- Education on technology and governance.
- Education, awareness, coop vision—Expertise is needed for better analysis.
- Ethical discussion.
- Public policy (regulation)—everyone wants a tool, a model that helps.
- Data must be reviewed often - 5 years later, is it still relevant?
- Technologies building communities.
- AI as a tool for accompanying the digital transition.

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGIES:
- Report on subject knowledge and communities of practices.
- Activate resource sharing, either directly from coop to coop or through federations.
- Share between structures—discussion to go further, sees bigger than one's own company.
- Leadership of cooperative federations in planning and standardization.
- By grouping these elements, we get a structured view of the challenges facing cooperatives, the levers that can be used to overcome them, and the recommended intercooperation strategies.

Summary

Cooperatives face complex challenges, including managing legitimacy towards members, establishing an effective working framework, and managing relationships between management, consumer services, and governance. Engagement and participation are also crucial, involving the challenge of disengagement and the need to ensure deep participation while managing technology adoption and understanding principles of good governance. Challenges related to the use of digital tools include the need to clarify objectives, judiciously choose digital tools, address digital inequalities, and prepare for change management.

To overcome these challenges, several levers are identified, such as adapting and effectively using tools, peer learning, education on technology and governance, a focus on ethics and regulation, as well as integrating technologies to build communities and using AI as a tool to accompany digital transition.

Best practices for intercooperation include the sharing of knowledge and resources, illustrated by reports on subject knowledge and communities of practices. Activating resource sharing directly between cooperatives or through federations is also emphasized, as well as promoting the sharing of ideas between different structures, with a particular focus on the leadership of cooperative federations in planning and standardization. This structured approach provides a comprehensive guide for addressing challenges, mobilizing levers, and implementing intercooperation strategies in the context of cooperatives.

Food for thought on protecting democratic governance

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a powerful ally in improving the democratic governance of cooperatives, but it is imperative to implement rigorous measures to ensure its ethical and responsible use. Below are recommendations aimed at preventing corruption in the democratic governance of cooperatives, as well as ways in which AI can positively support:

Preventing Governance Corruption:

- Transparency and Explainability: It is essential to ensure that AI systems used in decision-making remain transparent and explainable. Members and leaders of cooperatives must have a clear understanding of how algorithms influence decisions to maintain trust.

- Inclusive Participation: Active participation of members and leaders in the deployment and use of AI is essential. This ensures that the democratic values of the cooperative are taken into account holistically.

- Human Control: Prioritize human control over final decisions. AI systems should be considered decision support tools rather than autonomous entities making decisions.

- Independent Audit: Regular audits of AI systems by independent third parties are necessary to assess their compliance with ethical standards and democratic principles.

How AI Can Help:
- Data Analysis: AI can facilitate the analysis of large amounts of data, providing crucial information for fact-based democratic decision-making.

- Facilitation of Democratic Processes: AI technologies can be deployed to facilitate online voting processes, enabling broader and more convenient member participation.

- Prediction of Trends: AI can be used to anticipate future trends, helping the cooperative respond to anticipate members needs and concerns.

- Personalization: AI systems can personalize communications and services, responding more accurately to the specific needs of each member.

- Automation of Routine Tasks: By automating repetitive tasks, AI frees up time for cooperative members and leaders, allowing them to focus on more strategic decisions.

- Bias Detection: AI tools can be designed to detect and mitigate potential biases, ensuring fair and democratic decision-making.

By adopting these measures, cooperatives can maximize the benefits of AI while preserving the fundamental values of democratic governance. This requires a delicate balance between integrating emerging technologies and preserving essential cooperative principles.

Workshop Digital coop sustainability

10:45	**Digital Coop Sustainability**: this session discusses whether and how digital technologies can help cooperatives in performing sustainability transitions aligned with their identity. While digital solutions facilitate inter-organizational collaboration, they also come with their own limitations and challenges, such as questionable extractive data management, high energy consumption, and standardization of behaviors. Are the concepts of "digital" and "cooperative sustainability" exclusive, or can we make them work together? Which transitions bottlenecks could be overcome through a better use of digital tools? What digital technologies and tools, if any, are specifically relevant for a cooperative sustainability transition?
Facilitator	**Martin Van Den Borre,** Manager Communautiq et Fad City
Panelists	**David Thomas**, General Manager at Open Food Network Canada, Canada **Sara Horowitz**, Founder and Executive director of Freelancers Union and CEO of Freelancer Insurance Company (FIC), United-States **Igor Calzada**, MBA, Principal Investigator/Research Fellow, Ikerbasque, University of the Basque Country, and Cardiff University

Notes taken during the workshop

CHALLENGES:
- Need to popularize technologies.
- Need to guide users in adopting tools.
- Encouragement of the adoption and appropriation of digital tools.
- Evaluation and minimization of the environmental impact of technologies.
- We need to improve members' digital literacy.
- Building members' trust in the use of technologies.
- Prevention of the loss of continuity and data during digital processes.
- Promotion of data cooperatives as a means to empower members and ensure responsible data management and ownership, contributing to the ethical and equitable use of technology.

LEVERS:
- Emphasis on popularization and user support, including the promotion of data cooperatives to empower members in responsible data management and ownership.
- Encouragement of data sharing and learning platforms, with data cooperatives playing a pivotal role in facilitating collaborative data sharing and knowledge exchange among members.
- Adoption of open standards to ensure interoperability, enabling data cooperatives to align with industry standards for data exchange and compatibility.
- Collaboration between cooperatives, data sharing, and benchmarking, which can include benchmarking data cooperative practices for improved outcomes and a more equitable consumer experience.
- Improvement of the consumer experience, with a global focus on Southern regions to create a model that integrates data cooperatives to promote equitable and ethical data practices.

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGIES:
- Promote accessibility and equitable provision of technology, including the integration of cooperative data to ensure that technology benefits are distributed fairly among members.
- Emphasize knowledge sharing, democracy, and member participation/engagement, with a focus on cooperative data as a means to foster collaboration and member involvement in data management.
- Use regulations for the management of cooperative databases, ensuring that cooperative data is managed in compliance with data protection and privacy regulations.
- Integrate sustainability into the context of meaning and technology, incorporating cooperative data practices that promote responsible and sustainable data management.
- Focus actions on communication, transparency, and the creation of member communities, with cooperative data serving as a tool to enhance communication, transparency, and trust among members within the cooperative framework.

Summary

The **challenges** encompass a wide range of issues, including the need to popularize technologies, guide users in adopting digital tools, promote the responsible use of technology, and minimize its environmental impact. Furthermore, improving members' digital literacy, building trust in technology, and ensuring data continuity during digital processes are essential. A key solution lies in promoting data cooperatives as a means to empower members and foster ethical and equitable technology usage.

To address these challenges, several **levers** can be employed. These include a strong emphasis on popularization and user support, with data cooperatives playing a central role in promoting responsible data management. Encouraging data sharing and learning platforms, adopting open standards for interoperability, and fostering collaboration among cooperatives and benchmarking their practices contribute to a more equitable consumer experience. The improvement of the consumer experience, with a global focus on Southern regions, integrates data cooperatives to promote ethical data practices on a larger scale.

Intercooperation strategies are aimed at fostering cooperation among cooperatives. They involve promoting equitable access to technology and ensuring that technology benefits are distributed fairly through cooperative data integration. Emphasis is also placed on knowledge sharing, democracy, and member participation, with a focus on cooperative data as a means to enhance collaboration. The use of regulations for managing cooperative databases ensures data compliance. Integrating sustainability into technology and meaning involves the responsible management of cooperative data to promote sustainability. Lastly, communication, transparency, and the creation of member communities are facilitated through cooperative data to enhance trust and engagement within the cooperative framework.

In summary, these challenges, levers, and intercooperation strategies collectively contribute to the responsible and equitable use of technology and the empowerment of cooperative members, with data cooperatives playing a vital role in this process.

Food for thought on power of digital commons with data cooperatives

Unlocking the power of **digital commons** with data cooperatives involves several key steps and considerations. Here's a roadmap to help you achieve this:

- Educate and Build Awareness: Start by educating stakeholders, including potential members and partners, about the concept of data cooperatives and their potential benefits. Create awareness about the importance of data ownership and control.

- Define the Purpose and Objectives: Clearly define the purpose and objectives of your data cooperative. What data will be shared and for what purpose? What specific issues or challenges will the cooperative address?

- Legal and Governance Framework: Establish a robust legal and governance framework for the cooperative. This should include bylaws, membership agreements, and data sharing policies. Ensure that data management complies with relevant data protection regulations.

- Membership Recruitment: Recruit members who are willing to contribute data and collaborate. Ensure that the membership is diverse and representative of the community or industry you serve.

- Data Collection and Management: Set up mechanisms for data collection and management. This may involve creating data-sharing platforms, secure storage, and data governance protocols.

- Data Sharing Agreements: Develop clear data sharing agreements that outline the terms, conditions, and benefits of data sharing among members. These agreements should protect members' interests and ensure fair and responsible data usage.

- Technology Infrastructure: Invest in the necessary technology infrastructure to securely collect, store, and share data. This should include cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive information.

- Collaboration and Partnerships: Explore collaborations with other cooperatives, organizations, or entities that can benefit from the data you collect. Foster relationships that enable broader data sharing and mutual support.

- Promotion and Advocacy: Actively promote the cooperative's work and advocate for the responsible and ethical use of data. Highlight the benefits of data cooperatives for members and the community.

- Transparency and Accountability: Maintain transparency in data management and cooperative operations. Regularly report to members on how their data is used and the impact it creates.

- Sustainability and Growth: Develop a sustainable business model for the cooperative. Ensure that it can adapt and grow over time. Seek opportunities for expansion and impact.

- Evaluation and Improvement: Continuously evaluate the cooperative's effectiveness and impact. Gather feedback from members and stakeholders and make improvements as needed.

- Legal and Ethical Considerations: Stay updated on legal and ethical considerations related to data sharing, privacy, and data protection. Ensure that the cooperative remains in compliance with relevant regulations.

Good to know

Digital Commons" and "Collaborative Data Platforms" are related concepts, but they have distinct meanings and serve different purposes. Here are the key differences between the two:

Definition and Purpose:
- *Digital Commons: Digital Commons refer to shared resources in the digital realm, such as open-access content, data, software, and knowledge, that are made available for common use and benefit. The purpose of a Digital Commons is to create a public, accessible, and often free repository of digital assets that can be used by individuals, organizations, and communities for various purposes, including research, education, and creative projects.*

- *Collaborative Data Platforms: Collaborative data platforms, on the other hand, are tools, technologies, or systems that facilitate the collaborative management, sharing, and analysis of data within a group or community. The primary purpose of these platforms is to enable users to work together on data-related tasks, such as data collection, analysis, and decision-making, in a collaborative and efficient manner.*

Scope:
- *Digital Commons: Digital Commons encompass a broader range of digital assets, including educational materials, scientific research, creative works, and open-source software. They are typically designed to be openly accessible to the public or a specific community.*

- *Collaborative Data Platforms: Collaborative data platforms are more specific and are primarily focused on data management, collaboration, and sharing within a defined group or organization. They often include features for data storage, access control, data analysis, and communication among users.*

Accessibility:
- *Digital Commons: Digital Commons are often designed for open access, meaning that the resources within them are freely available to the public or a specific target audience. The emphasis is on broad accessibility and sharing.*

- *Collaborative Data Platforms: Collaborative data platforms are designed for controlled access within a specific group or community. Users within this group typically have permissions to access and contribute to the data on the platform, and the access is not necessarily open to the public.*

Use Cases:
- *Digital Commons: Digital Commons are used for sharing knowledge, research, creative works, and educational resources. They are particularly valuable for fostering open access to information and promoting collaboration across various domains.*

- *Collaborative Data Platforms: Collaborative data platforms are used for managing and working with data, especially in scenarios where multiple individuals or teams need to collaborate on data-related tasks. This includes data analysis, data collection, project management, and more.*

In summary, "Digital Commons" is a broader concept that encompasses various digital resources made available for common use, often with a focus on open access. "Collaborative Data Platforms" are specific tools or systems designed to facilitate collaborative data management and analysis within a defined group or organization. While they share a common theme of collaboration and data sharing, their scope and purpose are distinct.

More to read on data cooperative and digital communs

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Workshop Digital intercooperation

10:45	**Digital intercooperation**: this session addresses principle 6, cooperation among cooperatives, in light of potential benefits offered by digital solutions. While the cooperative movement is characterized by a long-established network of cooperative associations, federations, and second-level cooperatives, online collaboration among cooperatives is still experienced as a hurdle by most practitioners. From citizens' point of view, simple information such as how many cooperatives operate in my region and which services/products they offer is still hardly possible to find online. Why are cooperative networks so hard to replicate online? Can cooperative associations better capitalize on digital technologies to improve collaboration with and among their members? How can interoperable technologies, such as Solid and Web3, help the cooperative movement to untap the potential of its principle 6?
Facilitator	**Luc Audebrand**, Full Professor, Laval University, Canada
Panelists	**Dan Lussier**, Director, Canadian Agri-Food Data Initiative, Canada **Shaun Fensom**, Secretary, Cooperative network Infrastructure, United-Kingdom **Philippe Labrecque**, Development Officer, Social Economy Center of the Longueuil Agglomeration, Canada

Notes taken during the workshop

ISSUES:
- Data regulation and governance.
- Compatibility of technologies.
- The cost of technology development.
- Lack of communication (meeting and exchange places).

LEVERS:
- Communities of practice/levers (gateway).
- Interoperability.
- Pooling, giving space-time.
- Training, education.
- People-centred development/application.
- Creative/non-linear interoperation.
- Open collaboration integrated into both digital and technological models.
- Democratic (from the cooperative model).

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGIES:
- Data and technology pooling, sharing contacts and knowledge.
- Identification of experts.
- Co-create & co-construct.
- Application of cooperative principles based on the responsibility of each member.
- Change management.
- Prioritizing transparency:
  - About digital data collection and security (clarifying ownership versus control).
  - About source code and development.
- Mentorship responsibility, open source code.
- Develop a strategy with other partners.
- Government policies to facilitate the structure of cooperation.
- Examples of the successful practice of Statistics Canada and its data sharing.

Summary

The **challenges** to address in the context of cooperation include data regulation and governance, compatibility of technologies, the cost of technology development, and the need to create meeting and exchange spaces.

To address these challenges, various **levers** are available, such as training, education, the creation of communities of practice, the promotion of interoperability, pooling of resources and knowledge, user-centred development, a creative and non-linear approach to interoperation, and the adoption of democratic principles inherited from the cooperative model.

Intercooperation strategies and best practices recommend data and technology pooling, sharing contacts and knowledge, identification of experts, co-creation and co-construction of solutions, application of cooperative principles based on individual responsibility, change management, prioritization of transparency in data collection and security, openness of source code and development, mentorship responsibility, adoption of government policies encouraging cooperation, and finally, the successful example of Statistics Canada in data sharing.

Food for thought on interoperability within the cooperative

Promoting interoperability within the cooperative and mutual business model is of significant importance to foster collaboration and synergy among different entities. Interoperability, defined as the ability of systems to interact and exchange information seamlessly, can bring several benefits in this particular context:

- Facilitation of Cooperation: Interoperability enables cooperatives and mutual entities to work together seamlessly by integrating their systems and processes. This facilitates interorganizational cooperation, thereby enhancing efficiency and productivity.

- Resource Sharing: By promoting interoperability, cooperatives can share resources such as data, applications, or infrastructure. This leads to more efficient use of available resources, thereby reducing operational costs.

- Collaborative Innovation: Interoperability promotes innovation by allowing cooperatives to collaborate on common initiatives. This can lead to the creation of new solutions, products, or services beneficial to all members.

- Improved Customer Experience: In a cooperative and mutualistic model, where the focus is often on serving members, interoperability can contribute to providing a smoother and more consistent customer experience as information is shared seamlessly among different entities.

- Adaptability and agility: Interoperability enables cooperatives to adapt more quickly to changes, whether they are regulatory modifications, new technologies, or market evolution. This enhances their agility and ability to remain competitive.

To implement the promotion of interoperability within a cooperative and mutualistic model, it is essential to establish common standards, invest in compatible technologies, and foster a culture of collaboration within the cooperative community. This contributes to strengthening the solidarity and sustainability of the cooperative model by maximizing the benefits of cooperation among different entities.

Workshop Digital coop education

10:45	**Digital Coop Education:** this session looks at how cooperatives could use digital solutions to mainstream cooperative education. Looking at past and existing digital initiatives, we will attempt to identify promising levers facilitating the diffusion of cooperative knowledge, as well as the shortfalls preventing our model to go mainstream across various educational frameworks. Is cooperative education more accessible thanks to digital solutions, or does it tend to be buried among the mass of (not-so-cooperative) information? How do we learn to cooperate through existing digital learning spaces? And, more generally, should cooperative education tend to go online, or should it rather focus on physical, in-person experiences?
Facilitator	**Claude-André Guillotte,** Director, IRECUS, Department of Entrepreneurship, School of Management, University of Sherbrooke, Canada
Panelists	**Ilana Gotz,** EURICE and ICBEC coordinator, Italy **John Kay,** CEO and Senior Instructor, Live Learning Labs, RealizeU, Canada **Janielle Maxwell,** Project Coordinator, JEDDI Business Conversion Project, Canada

Notes taken during the workshop

CHALLENGES:

- Accessibility: Complications of access in remote regions and among the elderly.
- Valuation of Entrepreneurship: Insufficient recognition of individual and collective/cooperative entrepreneurship. The need to promote this model and offer dedicated training programs.
- Access to Tools: Need to improve access to tools necessary for cooperative education.
- Model Attractiveness: Challenge related to lack of knowledge or disinterest.
- Questioning what should come first, the egg (attraction) or the chicken (knowledge).
- Presence and Connection: Need to foster presence, availability, and the creation of links within cooperatives.
- Interpersonal Engagement: Importance of engagement and interpersonal connection, especially between teachers and students.
- Pre-awareness: Need for pre-education and incentives, emphasizing cooperative values and overcoming digital obstacles.
- Access/Barriers: Challenges related to access, especially for distance education, rural areas, new technologies, the elderly, and a lack of financial resources.
- Digital Divide: Risk of deepening the digital divide in the cooperative education process.
- Cooperative Leadership: Need for strong leadership within cooperatives to guide and inspire.
- Public Awareness: Need to increase public awareness of the cooperative model.
- Perceptions and Interests: Challenges related to perceptions and a lack of interest in the cooperative model.
- External Market Pressure: Risk of prioritizing external market requirements to the detriment of cooperative education.
- Timing: Temporal challenge, risk of launching cooperative education development too late.
- Access to Technology: Inequalities in comfort with technology, with implications for online education.

- External Awareness: Need to raise awareness outside cooperatives to encourage understanding of the cooperative model.
- Perception Change: Need to change perceptions and instill awareness among young people about the ability of cooperatives to meet their expectations.
- Digital Poverty: Challenge of digital poverty, especially regarding access to technology.
- Clarity of Objectives: Need to clarify if the objective is education, training, or information, as needs may differ.
- Opportunities: Identification and exploitation of new and existing opportunities for cooperative education.

LEVERS:

- Intercooperation, partnership with other organizations.
- Sharing success stories, displaying cooperative identity.
- Added flexibility for people who work, live, communicate (learn differently, especially for adult learning).
- Global cooperation adding experiences.
- Strategies using digital tools that can reach the younger generation.
- The number of cooperatives, members, employees (the critical mass of people and finances).
- Entering schools.
- Lobbying governments and partners.
- Timing - economic context.
- Promoting the employer brand, entry keys + selection.
- Digital/cooperative marketing: to commercialize them.
- Ambassadors of the cooperative model, created to teach the model.
- Cooperating between cooperatives.
- Cooperatives resonate with you - short clips like "What-If."
- Online career day.

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGIES:

- Youth strategy: more cooperative education in the school curriculum (primary and secondary).
- Use the right format according to objectives (synchronous/asynchronous/distance/presence).
- Distance training for managers to which Agropur wants to add a module that will be done in person.
- Include digital literacy training.
- Creation of Label/Accreditation/Digital Entity to meet cooperative specifications - but beware, digital can facilitate problem-solving but does not guarantee it will happen!
- Focus on why cooperatives work.
- International fund for education.
- Customized programs + gamification options - Combination of traditional and alternative learning.

Summary

Cooperative education faced with digital challenges encounters significant obstacles related to accessibility, particularly in remote regions and among the elderly. These difficulties are exacerbated by widespread unawareness and a lack of interest in the cooperative model.

To overcome these barriers, various levers are identified. Flexibility proves crucial to adapting to diverse audiences, while the strategic use of digital formats and enriching international cooperation are means to maximize the impact of cooperative education through digital means.

Intercooperation perspectives emphasize a proactive approach, notably through a youth strategy aiming to integrate cooperative education more into school curricula. Furthermore, the creation of digital labels is considered to meet cooperative standards in an ever-evolving digital environment. The need to include digital literacy training underscores the importance of a holistic approach, encompassing essential digital skills, to effectively overcome challenges related to cooperative education in the current digital context.

Food for thought on the issue of digital labels

- The creation of digital labels could be a mechanism aimed at certifying and recognizing cooperative educational initiatives. These digital labels could be awarded to cooperative educational programs that demonstrate a commitment to criteria of quality, efficiency, and relevance in the digital context.

- These labels could also play a crucial role in promoting best practices, fostering learner trust, and enhancing the credibility of online cooperative programs. They could be designed to evolve in line with technological advancements and changes in the digital landscape, ensuring ongoing adaptation to emerging standards.

The establishment of digital labels could be a proactive initiative to maintain and elevate cooperative educational standards in the rapidly evolving digital context, providing formal recognition and quality assurance to learners and stakeholders.

Together we LEAD
Reports of the interactive workshops conducted with participants

Workshop Convergences

Cooperative initiatives face a multitude of complex challenges, including resistance to change, deficits in leadership, diverse contexts, and threats to cultural individuality. Moreover, evolving issues and rapid problem dynamics complicate mobilization due to limitations in financial and human resources. Divergent approaches, operational challenges, and external factors like global paradigms further contribute to the complexity of cooperative leadership.

Strategic levers to address these challenges encompass the use of democratic governance tools, promotion of collective leadership, and the cultivation of a shared vision. Encouraging willingness to share, emphasizing values, equity, reciprocity, and acknowledging ongoing transformations are key. External levers such as federations, researchers, and inspiring leadership play strategic roles in supporting cooperative initiatives.

Best practices in this context involve the creation of federations or intersectoral organizations, deep recognition of diversity, strong engagement in education and research, and the utilization of existing relationships as models for the future. Learning from mistakes, intersectoral collaboration, sharing successes, and inclusivity are essential practices to enhance cooperative leadership.

Collectively, these insights highlight the significance of addressing cooperative leadership challenges to foster effective leadership, enhance cooperation, and adapt to the ever-evolving cooperative landscape.

Workshop Organizing collectively to transform

15:00	**Organizing collectively to transform:** As we grapple with widespread systemic challenges across environmental, economic, and social systems, the need for transformation has never felt more relevant. This workshop is an opportunity to move from ideas to understanding purpose-driven examples. Let's discuss the tough questions: Does organizing collectively accelerate the transformation? What are the difficulties, contributions?
Facilitator	**Justine Ballon**, Assistant professor, Department of management, HEC Montréal, Canada
Panelists	• **Luc Audebrand**, Full Professor, Laval University, Canada • **Sokchiveneath Taing Chhoan**, Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, Canada • **Sarah de Heusch,** DirectorDirector, Social Economy Europe, Belgium

Notes taken during the workshop

CHALLENGES:
- Resistance to change.
- Lack of leadership and difficult prioritization.
- Diversity of contexts, interests, objectives, working in silos.
- Loss of individuality on a cultural level.
- Constantly changing issues, challenges posed by the evolving nature of problems and concerns.
- Limits of financial and human capital, difficult mobilization.
- Individual interests, divergence, and diversity of approaches and needs.
- Time and operational challenges related to the intensity of work and the need for precise synchronization.
- External obstacles such as global paradigms and system complexity, as well as challenges related to the concrete use of data.
- Limitation of vision in the short term and daily perspective.
- Challenges related to the common pooling process and an internal philosophy focused on members.
- Lack of understanding of the model, difficulties related to the scale of change, complexity of the process, and the risk of disengagement.
- Issues resulting from an excessive focus on divergences.
- Challenges related to finding a balance between individual autonomy, personal interests, and the common good.
- Time and effort management for the long term.

LEVERS:
- Use of democratic governance tools.
- Promotion of collective leadership and a shared vision.
- Encouragement of a willingness to share, with Open Source software as a concrete example.
- Search for the link, values, equity, promoting reciprocity.
- Awareness of the ongoing transformation.
- Acceptance and formalization of common goals and values.
- The use of external organizations, such as federations, to strengthen cooperation.
- Use of researchers as levers for innovation.

- Promotion of powerful and inspiring leadership.

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGY—BEST PRACTICE:
- Establishment of a federation or intersectoral organization, as observed in the example of New Quebec.
- Recognition and consideration of the diversity of needs, with a focus on the local level.
- Engagement in education and research to address these diverse needs.
- The use of existing relationships as models for the future.
- Continuous learning from mistakes to improve collaboration practices.
- Facilitation of connection between different sectors for broader collaboration.
- Learning from past successes as a source of inspiration.
- Promotion of solidarity to strengthen ties among cooperative actors.
- Sharing successes to inspire other actors.
- The inclusion of non-members and accessibility for broader participation.
- Encouragement to take action.

Summary

Cooperative initiatives face several **challenges**, such as resistance to change, a deficit in leadership, diversity of contexts and interests, as well as the threat of losing individuality on a cultural level. Constantly evolving issues and the speed of problems add a layer of complexity, making mobilization difficult due to limits in financial and human capital. Divergences in individual approaches and needs, coupled with time and operational challenges, create obstacles to specify synchronization. External challenges, such as global paradigms, system complexity, and obstacles related to the practical use of data, further complicate the cooperative landscape. Short-term vision limitations, challenges in the pooling process, the risk of disengagement, excessive focus on divergences, and the search for a balance between individual autonomy and the collective good are also major challenges.

To address these challenges, **levers** such as the use of democratic governance tools, the promotion of collective leadership and a shared vision, as well as encouragement of a willingness to share, represented by Open Source software, are essential. The search for connection, values, equity, and the promotion of reciprocity are key levers to strengthen collaboration. Awareness of the ongoing transformation, along with the acceptance and formalization of common goals and values, are also crucial. The use of external levers, such as federations and researchers for innovation, and the promotion of powerful and inspiring leadership, are strategic elements to support cooperative initiatives.

The best **strategic** practice involves creating a federation or intersectoral organization, as illustrated by the example of New Quebec. This requires a deep recognition of the diversity of needs, strong engagement in education and research to address them, and the use of existing relationships as models for the future. Continuous learning from mistakes, intersectoral connection, learning from past successes, promotion of solidarity, sharing successes to inspire other actors, inclusion of non-members, accessibility, and encouragement to take action are also essential practices to foster successful intercooperation.

Food for thought on the support and mentorship model within cooperatives

An idea to develop in the context of "Organizing Collectively for Transformation" could be the creation of a support and mentorship model within cooperatives. This model would aim to overcome the mentioned challenges while leveraging the identified levers to strengthen collaboration and innovation within cooperative initiatives.

- Cooperative Support Program: Develop a structured program that provides specific support for each identified challenge. For example, training sessions on change management, strengthening collective leadership, and workshops to overcome cultural resistance could be included.

- Cooperative Mentor Network: Establish a network of experienced mentors within the cooperative movement. These mentors could share their knowledge and expertise with other cooperatives, providing practical solutions to operational and strategic challenges.

- Best Practices Sharing Platform: Create a dedicated digital platform for cooperation where cooperatives can share their successes, lessons learned, and best practices. This would contribute to strengthening the cooperative community and inspiring other initiatives.

- Collaborative Events: Regularly organize intercooperative events such as conferences, workshops, and forums to foster intersectoral connection. These events could be opportunities for learning and exchange among cooperatives.

- Inclusion and Accessibility Program: Implement specific initiatives to include non-members, thereby encouraging broader participation. This could be done through educational programs, public forums, and awareness initiatives.

- Impact Measurement and Continuous Improvement: Integrate impact measurement mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of collaborative practices implemented. Analyzing the results would allow continuous improvement of the support model.

By developing this idea, the concept of "organizing collectively for transformation" could be embodied in a practical model that enhances the resilience and prosperity of cooperative initiatives in the face of contemporary challenges.

Workshop Co-operation throughout the supply chain

15:00	**Co-operation throughout the supply chain:** Co-operation among co-operatives throughout a supply chain results in a powerful contribution to a more just and equitable economy and society. This workshop will delve into examples of successful strategies to build co-op to co-op business, often featuring collectivity through secondary co-ops and groups.
Facilitator	**Patrice Gauthier**, General Director, Écono Coop, Canada
Panelists	• **Patrick Cyr,** Senior Director of International Operations, Desjardins International Development, Canada • **Tyler Paturel,** General director Cheticamp Co-operative Ltd, Canada • **LuAnn Werner,** Deputy Director, Overseas Cooperative Development Council (OCDC), United States

Notes taken during the workshop

ISSUES:

- Limited offerings in supply chains—Risk of restricting the diversity of available products, impacting customer satisfaction, and competitiveness.
- Lack of intermediaries to connect chains—Difficulty in establishing smooth connections between different parts of the supply chain, leading to delays and inefficiencies. —Risk of disconnect with on-the-ground needs and operational realities, potentially hindering operational efficiency.
- Disregarding on-the-ground reality, arriving with a pre-established and original model.
- Coherence and sustainability - Challenges related to ensuring the consistency of actions while promoting sustainability in operations - Need to maximize the efficient use of available resources to support collectivization.
- Limited resources for collectivization—Challenges related to adapting to competitive markets while promoting distinctive cooperative values.
- Competition in markets lacking cooperative values.
- Facing shocks and adapting to them—Developing resilience to potential shocks in the operational environment.
- Adhering to produced standards, regulations, demand, marketing, taste—Need to align with regulatory standards, market demand requirements, and consumer preferences.
- Identification of cooperative partners—Challenge related to identifying reliable partners aligned with cooperative objectives to strengthen collaboration.

LEVERS:
- 100% of existing cooperative value chains—Use of existing cooperative structures as a solid foundation for development and growth.
- Trust (based on values) in the transaction—Promote trust among stakeholders, thus strengthening business relationships and fostering cooperation.
- Cooperative Umbrella Association—Use of a cooperative umbrella association to strengthen coordination and cooperation among different entities.

- Increasing awareness and interest of the public in social economy and ethical sourcing—Capitalize on the growing public awareness to enhance adherence to social economy and ethical sourcing.

INTEROPERATION STRATEGIES:
- Analysis and comparison of value chains—In-depth evaluation of value processes to identify areas for improvement and optimization.
- Cooperative buying and distribution networks—Establishment of collaborative networks to improve the efficiency of purchasing and distribution.
- Unite yourselves! —Encourage collaboration among actors, emphasizing unity to overcome collective challenges.
- Raise awareness through C2C labelling (facilitation of cooperative-to-cooperative exchanges)—Use specific labelling to inform and educate the public about ethical and cooperative sourcing.

Summary

Major challenges identified in the context of cooperative supply chains include limited offerings, a lack of intermediaries to connect chains, and the risk of disregarding on-the-ground reality by adopting a pre-established model. These challenges could impede product diversity, cause delays, and compromise operational efficiency.

Coherence and sustainability emerge as key issues, with the need to maintain the alignment of actions while promoting sustainable practices. Additionally, limited resources for collectivization pose a challenge, involving the adaptation to competitive markets while preserving distinctive cooperative values. Competition in markets lacking cooperative values highlights a particular tension in this context.

Faced with potential shocks, the need to adhere to regulatory standards and market requirements, and the identification of reliable cooperative partners, these issues underscore the complexity and diversity of challenges faced in cooperative supply chains.

Identified levers to overcome these challenges include the use of existing cooperative value chains, promoting trust based on values in transactions, establishing a cooperative umbrella association for enhanced coordination, and capitalizing on the growing public awareness of social economy and ethical sourcing.

Intercooperation strategies aim to optimize value processes through in-depth analysis, improve the efficiency of purchasing and distribution through cooperative networks, encourage collaboration among actors to overcome collective challenges, and raise public awareness through specific labelling facilitating cooperative-to-cooperative exchanges. These strategies aim to create a resilient cooperative ecosystem aligned with common values and effectively addressing the complex challenges of supply chains.

Food for thought on the intersectoral holistic approach

Overcoming challenges in cooperative supply chains requires a strategic and collaborative approach. Here are suggestions to address these challenges:

Enhanced Collaboration:
- Encourage close collaboration among different stakeholders in the supply chain, including producers, processors, distributors, and retailers.
- Establish transparent communication mechanisms to share crucial information throughout the chain.

Use of Information Technologies:
- Adopt information technologies such as supply chain management systems, product tracking platforms, and real-time visibility solutions.
- Technologies like blockchain can be used to ensure traceability and transparency in the supply chain.

Training and Awareness:
- Train stakeholders to understand specific issues in cooperative supply chains and promote awareness of cooperative principles.
- Conduct training sessions on operational efficiency, sustainability, and regulatory compliance.

Diversification of Supply Sources:
- Diversify supply sources to reduce dependence on a single source.
- Identify and develop partnerships with alternative suppliers, if possible, to ensure the continuity of supplies.

Flexibility and Agility:
- Integrate flexibility into the supply chain to adapt quickly to changes in demand or market conditions.
- Adopt an agile approach that allows adjusting processes based on changing needs.

Risk Management:
- Implement risk management mechanisms to identify, assess, and mitigate potential risks in the supply chain.
- Develop contingency plans to address unforeseen events.

Continuous Improvement:
- Implement a culture of continuous improvement by regularly evaluating processes and identifying optimization opportunities.
- Seek feedback from stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.

Community Engagement:
- Actively involve local communities and stakeholders in the supply chain process.
- Promote social and environmental initiatives within the supply chain.

Strategic Partnerships:
- Establish strategic partnerships with other cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, governments, and businesses to strengthen the supply chain.

Strategic Monitoring:
- Maintain strategic monitoring of market trends, regulations, and technological innovations to stay competitive and adaptive.

Workshop Multistakeholder cooperative governance

15:00	**Multistakeholder cooperative governance:** Cooperatives can engage multiple types of members to address complex societal challenges through jointly owned and controlled enterprises. Workers, consumers, producers and community members participate in setting the strategic direction of cooperatives and their networks to address multiple issues: from social integration to circular design, ethical finance to the environmental impact.
Facilitator	**Martine Vézina,** HEC Montréal
Panelists	• **Goran Jeras**, Manager and Founder, Cooperative for Ethical Financing, Croatia • **Jean Nolet,** General Director, Coop Carbone, Canada • **Jean R. Soublière**, Directeur général, MC2M, Canada

Notes taken during the workshop

CHALLENGES:
- Corporate culture (values)
- Conflicting interests
- Disagreement on common needs
- Complexity
- Different priorities
- Misunderstanding | Fear
- Power distribution
- Legislative framework
- strong social issue for whom?

LEVERS:
- Cooperation
- Education
- Segment approaches, ensuring a common foundation
- Organize the representation of each category
- Strategic planning, common goals (being a cooperative) — Cooperative identity
- Provide opportunities to bring all stakeholders together often—committee
- Clearly define different categories of members (especially support)
- Tap into the richness of diversity (internal ecosystem)

INTERCOOPERATION STRATEGIES:
- Have common goals
- Find a relationship formula
- Provide frequent feedback and communications
- Second-level coop to find solutions

Summary

Multistakeholder governance poses complex challenges, encompassing the management of corporate cultures based on diverse values, the resolution of opposing interests, the mediation of disagreements over common needs, navigating organizational complexity, harmonizing divergent priorities, managing misunderstanding and fear, ensuring equitable distribution of power, compliance with legislative frameworks, and understanding social issues subject to varied interpretations by stakeholders.

In the face of these challenges, strategic levers emerge. Cooperation, stakeholder education, segmentation of approaches to establish a common foundation, representative organization of each category, strategic planning based on shared goals, regular creation of opportunities to bring all stakeholders together, precise definition of different membership categories with an emphasis on support and leveraging the richness of internal diversity emerge as conducive levers for successful multistakeholder governance.

In the context of intercooperation, it becomes imperative to define common goals among stakeholders, seek a relationship formula tailored to the group's particularities, promote frequent feedback and communications to ensure a continuous flow of information, and explore solutions at the second-level cooperative to collectively address complex challenges. These strategies are essential for fostering effective collaboration and successful management of multistakeholder dynamics.

Food for thought on the holistic intersectoral approach

Multistakeholder governance has the potential to drive social and technological innovations on an international scale. Multistakeholder governance involves collaboration among various stakeholders, such as cooperatives and mutuals, the government, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions, and sometimes international organizations. This diversity of actors promotes an exchange of ideas, resources, and expertise, thereby creating an environment conducive to innovation.

Here's how multistakeholder governance can contribute to international-scale social and technological innovations:

- Diversity of Perspectives: The involvement of various stakeholders allows the integration of a variety of perspectives and experiences, fostering creativity and innovation.

- Resource Sharing: Multistakeholder partnerships facilitate the sharing of financial, intellectual, and material resources needed for researching and developing new ideas and technologies.

- Combined Expertise: Collaboration among entities with diverse expertise can lead to more comprehensive and innovative solutions, especially when these expertise areas are complementary.

- Access to a Broader Network: Multistakeholder governance provides access to a broader international network, offering opportunities to collaborate with global actors and facilitating the dissemination of innovations.

- Alignment of Objectives: By bringing together stakeholders with common goals, multistakeholder governance can create an environment conducive to achieving significant innovations that address global needs.

- Reduction of Barriers: Cooperation among governments, businesses, and civil society organizations can contribute to reducing bureaucratic barriers, thereby stimulating an environment more conducive to innovation.

- Positive Social Impact: Multistakeholder initiatives often focus on social and environmental goals, leading to innovations that address critical global issues such as climate change, poverty, or humanitarian crises.

- International Standards: Multistakeholder governance can also play a role in establishing international standards for new technologies, promoting adoption and interoperability on a global scale.

In summary, well structured and collaborative multistakeholder governance can indeed be a catalyst for social and technological innovation on an international scale, creating solutions that can have a significant impact in a global context.

Workshop Networking among co-ops and non-co-ops for local empowerment

15:00	**Networking among co-ops and non-co-ops for local empowerment** Co-operatives are only one of the ingredients in the robust and diverse ecosystem required to support a vibrant co-operative and broader social and solidarity economy. This workshop explores the range of ingredients, roles, and organizations that have resulted in regional hot spots for cooperation.
Facilitator	**Jessica Cabana**, Youth Cooperative Entrepreneurship Advisor at CQCM, Canada
Panelists	• **Mary Nirlungayuk**, Vice President, Corporate Services, Arctic Coops, Canada • **Elena Badeanschi,** Coordinator of the international activities and projects, Federazione trentina della cooperazione, Italy • **Hazel Corcoran,** Executive Director of the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation, Canada • **Claude-André Guillotte,** Director IRECUS, Department of Entrepreneurship, School of Management, University of Sherbrooke, Canada

Notes taken during the workshop

3 CHALLENGES:
- Non-aligned values (it is necessary to take the time to research to identify potential collaborators, and it is rare that profitable private companies are aligned, but often necessary to meet the needs of members or for business conversion – preference for identifying organizations that can be converted into cooperatives).
- Time and capacity, especially for developing informal connections (this pushes the potential to envision a macro strategy for economic and social transformation).
- Awareness and knowledge (about the cooperative movement and model. Schools do not talk enough about cooperatives to people who want to start businesses or to people who want to sell their companies. Increasingly, it is a model that responds to the needs of the youth due to ecological, social, and economic values).

LEVERS:
- Joining movements to increase our advocacy capacity for political interests, joining or initiating movements or campaigns that are transformative, innovative, and contemporary (example: 50/30 challenge).
- Cooperatives are robust models – and longevity – long-term overview. We can be a major player in local empowerment.

BEST PRACTICES:
- Comprehensive views of the potential for various types of collaborations that are formal and informal (and their respective strengths).
- Formal (with companies that share the same values such as schools, NGOs, collectives, union movements, political movements).
- Or informal (even if we are not in direct collaboration, there are allies found everywhere that can allow for allied collaboration or mutual benefits).

Summary

The main challenge lies in the alignment of values, requiring in-depth research to identify potential partners, as profitable private companies are often not aligned. However, these collaborations are sometimes necessary to meet the needs of members or convert businesses into cooperatives. It is preferable to identify organizations that can be converted into cooperatives.

The constraint of time and capacity, especially for developing informal connections, limits the potential for implementing a macro strategy for economic and social transformation. There is also a lack of awareness and knowledge about the cooperative movement, particularly in the entrepreneurial context. The cooperative model responds to the growing needs of the youth due to ecological, social, and economic values.

To overcome these challenges, some levers are present. It is crucial to join movements to strengthen advocacy capacity for political interests. Participating or initiating transformative and innovative movements or campaigns, such as the 50/30 challenge, can be a powerful lever. Cooperatives, as robust models, offer a long-term perspective on sustainability and can be major players in local empowerment.

In terms of best practices, a holistic approach involves considering the potential for both formal and informal collaborations, each with its specific strengths. Formal collaborations can be with companies that share the same values, such as schools, NGOs, collectives, union movements, and political movements. Informal collaborations, even if not direct, can involve allies found everywhere, allowing for allied collaboration or mutual benefits. A comprehensive understanding of these different forms of collaboration is essential to maximize opportunities for success.

Food for thought on creating regional hotspots conducive to cooperation

Cooperatives, although constituting an essential element of the cooperative and social economy, represent only one aspect of a larger and diversified ecosystem. Building a dynamic cooperative and solidarity-based economy requires a variety of elements, each playing a crucial role in supporting and growing these alternative economic models.

Cooperatives and mutuals can play a key role in creating regional hotspots favorable to cooperation by contributing to the wealth and diversity of necessary elements. Here are some ways in which they can contribute:

- Inclusive Economic Models: Cooperatives are based on democratic and participatory principles. They can incorporate a diversity of stakeholders, including workers, clients, and local communities, into the decision-making process. This promotes a more equitable distribution of wealth and contributes to economic inclusion.

- Education and Awareness: Cooperatives and mutuals can play an active role in raising awareness and educating community members about the benefits of cooperative models. They can collaborate with educational institutions to integrate cooperative education programs into curricula, thereby contributing to a profound understanding of these models.

- Networking and Collaboration: Cooperatives can foster informal and formal connections with other organizations, including mutuals, NGOs, social enterprises, and community initiatives. These partnerships expand the reach and impact of cooperative actions, creating a network of relationships that supports regional cooperation.

- Support for Local Initiatives: Cooperatives can provide financial and logistical support to local initiatives promoting sustainable development, social responsibility, and inclusion. By investing in community projects, they contribute to the creation of regional hotspots focused on cooperation and communal well-being.

- Political Advocacy: Cooperatives and mutuals can engage in advocacy efforts with local and national authorities to promote policies favorable to the social and solidarity economy. This may include tax incentives, specific funding programs, and regulations encouraging the establishment and growth of cooperatives.

- Participation in Social Movements: By participating in broader social movements, cooperatives and mutuals can contribute to transformative initiatives. This may involve campaigns to raise public awareness, influence policies, and create an environment conducive to cooperation and solidarity.

By bringing together these elements, cooperatives and mutuals become essential players in constructing a regional ecosystem conducive to cooperation. Their active engagement can inspire other actors to join this dynamic, thus creating regional hotspots where economic collaboration and solidarity thrive.