

# The Co-operative Movement

## A Historical Overview and Relevance to Northern & Aboriginal Communities

RDI Working Paper #2005-1

February 2005

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs mission is the removal of barriers and the development of better relations between the government and Aboriginal community, lending to successful outcomes for northern and aboriginal peoples, based on a common understanding and goals and issues. For more information, please visit [www.gov.mb.ca/ana](http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana).



Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives provides community economic development services to rural and northern communities, business and individuals. Rural Initiatives Division includes two branches, Economic Development Initiatives and Community, Cooperative and Regional Development Initiatives. For more information, please visit <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/ri/index.html>

Community Futures operates across rural and Northern Manitoba as a grassroots-driven program created to strengthen rural economies by enabling entrepreneurship and assisting in community economic development. For more information and detailed services provided by the CFDC's that contributed to this project contact:



**Cedar Lake Community Futures  
Development Corporation**

[www.cedarlake-cfdc.ca](http://www.cedarlake-cfdc.ca)

Box 569

The Pas, MB R9A 1K6

Tel: (204) 627-5450 Fax: (204) 627-5460

Email: [cl\\_cfdc@mb.sympatico.ca](mailto:cl_cfdc@mb.sympatico.ca)



**NEICOM Developments**

[www.neicom.mb.ca](http://www.neicom.mb.ca)

Box 10 12 Main Street North

Riverton MB, R0C 2R0

Tel: (204) 378-5106 Fax: (204) 482-2033

Email: [neicom@neicom.ca](mailto:neicom@neicom.ca)



**Parkland Community Futures  
Development Corporation**

[www.pcfdc.mb.ca](http://www.pcfdc.mb.ca)

Box 516 421 Main Street

Grandview MB, R0L 0Y0

Tel: (204) 546-5100 Fax: (204) 546-5107

Email [reception@pcfdc.mb.ca](mailto:reception@pcfdc.mb.ca)

**Winnipeg River Brokenhead Community  
Futures Development Corporation**

[www.wrbcfdc.mb.ca](http://www.wrbcfdc.mb.ca)

Box 505 Park Avenue

Lac du Bonnet, MB R0E 1A0

Tel: (204) 345-2514 Fax: (204) 345-6334

Email : [info@wrbcfdc.mb.ca](mailto:info@wrbcfdc.mb.ca)



The Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI) is the Government of Canada's new program to help people develop co-ops, and to research and test innovative ways of using the co-operative model. CDI will make the co-op option more readily available to Canadians, to respond to their present-day challenges. For more information, please visit [www.agr.gc.ca/policy/coop/information\\_e.phtml](http://www.agr.gc.ca/policy/coop/information_e.phtml).

Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute in 1989 as an academic research center and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada and elsewhere.

RDI functions as a not-for-profit research and development organization designed to promote, facilitate, coordinate, initiate and conduct multi-disciplinary academic and applied research on rural issues. The Institute provides an interface between academic research efforts and the community by acting as a conduit of rural research information and by facilitating community involvement in rural development. RDI projects are characterized by cooperative and collaborative efforts of multi-stakeholders.

The Institute has diverse research affiliations, and multiple community and government linkages related to its rural development mandate. RDI disseminates information to a variety of constituents and stakeholders and makes research information and results widely available to the public either in printed form or by means of public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences. For more information, please visit [www.brandonu.ca/rdi](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi).



**THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT**

**A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND  
RELEVANCE TO NORTHERN  
& ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

**RDI Working Paper #2005-1**

**February 2005**

**Rural Development Institute  
Brandon University  
Brandon, Manitoba R7A 6A9  
Canada**

Researched & prepared by:  
Ryan Gibson, Devron Kobluk, & Lori Gould  
Student Interns, Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT .....</b>	<b>1</b>
INTERNATIONAL ORIGINATING CONDITIONS.....	1
DEFINITION .....	2
PHILOSOPHY & PRINCIPLES .....	3
STRUCTURE OF CO-OPERATIVES .....	3
TYPES OF CO-OPERATIVES .....	4
CANADIAN CO-OPERATIVE OVERVIEW .....	5
<b>CO-OPERATIVES AND COMMUNITIES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
CASE STUDIES OF NORTHERN AND ABORIGINAL CO-OPERATIVES .....	6
<i>Neechi Foods Co-operative Limited: Winnipeg, Manitoba</i> .....	6
<i>Ikaluktutiak Co-operative: Cambridge Bay, Nunavut</i> .....	7
<i>Akochikan Co-operative: Pukatawagan, Manitoba</i> .....	8
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: CO-OPERATIVE GLOSSARY .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: CO-OPERATIVE WEBSITES .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## **Introduction**

The co-operative movement has been anything but static over the last century and a half. The movement has experienced aggressive expansion, an evolution of its philosophy and principles as well as an explosion in the number of members. The co-operative movement has been introduced to all regions of the world, within numerous different environments.

This paper will explore the historical context of the co-operative movement, address the initial originating conditions that lead to the development of the modern co-operative to its accepted definition and discusses the philosophy and principles of the movement. The six types of co-operatives are illustrated along with a discussion on co-operative structure and their role in Canadian communities.

The relevance of co-operatives to communities, in particular northern and aboriginal communities in Canada, is addressed in the final section of this paper. Case studies of three existing co-operatives (Neechi Foods Co-operative, Ikaluktutiak Co-operative, Akochikan Co-operative) provide insight to the role and importance of co-operatives in their respective communities.

It is clear from the case studies, as well as the general benefits that are associated with both members and communities, that co-operatives play an important role in community development. They may provide a needed community institution to improve both the social and economic value of its members.

## **Co-operative Movement**

The co-operative movement can attribute success to the commitment of its members. These members are integral at every level of decision making for co-operatives. Community residents form co-operatives for a variety of reasons including:

- people feel they have no power in the market place,
- no individual, or no existing organization, is providing a service they need,
- their jobs or their communities would disappear if they did not join together to save them, and
- they want to keep the control and the profits of a business in the community.

Co-operative development will be explored from the Rochdale pioneers to its current conditions. The philosophy and principles of the co-operative movement as well as structure and types of co-operatives are discussed. These elements are essential for understanding the relevance of the co-operative movement to northern and Aboriginal communities in Canada.

### ***International Originating Conditions***

The co-operative movement has been stimulated by a broad range of social needs such as community identity and control over key aspects of everyday life. The undermining of a community's identity and the evolution of our market-based economy saw co-operatives as an organizational response (Fulton & Laycock, 1990). The original co-operative movement was responding to the needs, stresses and opportunities that resulted from

social and economic modernization (Fairbairn, Axworthy, Fulton, Ketilson, & Laycock, 1990). These opportunities lead to the development of co-operatives in western Europe during the 1850s (Co-operative Futures Development Project, 1982).

Consumer co-operatives developed at a dramatic pace during the 1850s in England, the heartland of industrialization and modernization (Melnik, 1985). Co-operatives were also formulating in Germany during this period, however not as consumer co-operatives. Small-scale co-operatives developed based on agricultural needs in rural areas. Within the next two decades, Germany had developed both regional and national agricultural co-operatives to assist their members in production and marketing of their products (Fairbairn, Bold, Fulton, Ketilson, & Ish, 1991).

In 1844, twenty-eight unemployed community members in Rochdale, England pooled their resources and participated in cooperation for mutual benefit (Holyoake, 1908; Shaffer, 1999). The Rochdale consumer co-operative was founded on three principles: equality, equity and mutual self-help (Co-operatives Secretariat, 2003; Holyoake, 1908; Shaffer, 1999). Formally known as the Equitable Pioneers of Rochdale Society, Rochdale is seen as the foundation of the modern co-operative movement. Based on the three principles, the co-operative movement expanded into areas of the economy beyond consumer retail (England) and agriculture (Germany). Co-operatives were developed around financial issues such as loans and savings, employment opportunities or lack of opportunities and housing opportunities (Fairbairn et al., 1991). These principles remained until 1963, when the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) extrapolated the three principles into seven principles (Craig, 1980; Shaffer, 1999). The new seven principles are still underlined with the original three Rochdale principles.

Industrialization and the specialization of labour created an environment in which the Rochdale principles were able to succeed among community members. By offering an alternative, co-operatives were seen as helping people obtain goods and services that they may not otherwise be able to access, tailoring to their member's needs, building stronger communities and creating autonomy from external factors (Holyoake, 1908; Shaffer, 1999; Craig, 1980; Fairbairn et al., 1991).

### ***Definition***

Today, co-operatives are defined as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise” (Conn, 2003, 3). Co-operatives are founded on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. Based on the founding principles of co-operatives, members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004).

## ***Philosophy & Principles***

All co-operatives are expected to uphold each principle. First, co-operatives are to be open all members and voluntary. They are not intended to have discriminatory membership requirements. Secondly there is democratic member control. Members have equal voting rights, one member one vote. The third principle is that there is member economic participation. Members contribute to the capital of their co-operative. Surplus can be allocated back to members in the form of equity or it can be allocated for developing the co-operative, creating a reserve or to support other member approved activities. The fourth principle is that co-operatives are autonomous and independent. Co-operatives are self-help organizations that are controlled by their membership. The promotion of education, training and information is the fifth principle of co-operatives. Local co-operatives are to provide education and training to their members to ensure that each member can contribute effectively to the progress of the co-operative. The sixth principle is co-operation among co-operatives. The co-operative movement is most effective by working together with other co-operatives at different scales; local, regional, national or international. The seventh and final principle is a concern for the community. Co-operatives, by their nature, are focused on the needs of their members. Through attempting to achieve these needs, co-operatives work towards sustainable development of their communities (Canadian Co-operative Association, 2003b; Co-operatives Secretariat, 2003; Shaffer 1999).

Recognized around the world, the seven principles form the unique character that co-operatives possess. Regardless of the type or size, all co-operatives adhere to the ICA's seven principles. These principles distinguish co-operatives from the traditional business models.

Recognized around the world, the seven principles form the unique character that co-operatives possess. Regardless of the type or size, all co-operatives adhere to the ICA's seven principles. These principles distinguish co-operatives from the traditional business models.

## ***Structure of Co-operatives***

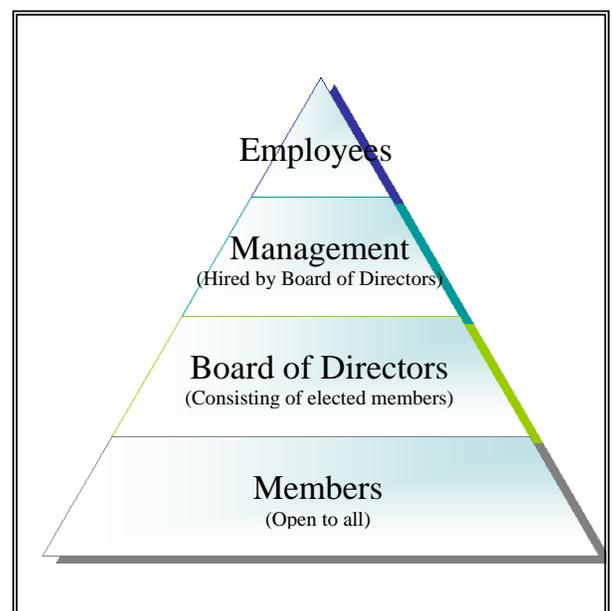
Co-operatives are designed with a 'bottom-up' approach unlike traditional business models. A series of differences in business approaches provides co-operatives a unique character.

Co-operatives are democratically controlled, with each member having one vote. There are no majority owners or owners who have a greater

### **7 Principles of Co-operatives**

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Member economic participation
4. Autonomous and independence
5. Education, training and information
6. Co-operation among co-operatives
7. Concern for community

(Canadian Co-operative Association, 2003)



**Figure 1: Organizational Structure of Co-operatives**

investment in the co-operative. Formed to provide goods and services to its members, co-operatives return any profits back to the community. Profits can be either re-invested in the co-operative or it can be returned to members in the form of dividend based on a member's patronage. Co-operatives are a union of people where traditional businesses tend to be a union of money designed to create a profit for its shareholders.

The unique structure of co-operatives allows local members to shape the vision, objectives and types of services that the co-operative offers. The opportunity to have direct and meaningful involvement is lacking in traditional businesses.

### ***Types of Co-operatives***

Although co-operatives exist all over the world, there are six main categories or types. All co-operatives, regardless if they are in a rural or urban setting, can be classified into one or more of these six categories.

#### **Marketing/Producer**

Marketing/producer co-operatives are organized to assist members in marketing their products, technical assistance and to offer supplies for purchase. Marketing/producer co-operatives may be organized around services such as fishing, farmer's markets and wheat pools.

Examples of marketing/producer co-operatives include Northwest Wild Rice Growers (The Pas, MB), Northwest Co-operative Fisheries (Leaf Rapids) and Le Marché St. Norbert (St. Norbert, MB) (Co-operatives Registrar, 2003).

#### **Consumer/Retail**

Organized to provide members with various types of goods and services. Consumer/retail co-operatives are probably one of the most recognizable co-operatives.

Examples of consumer/retail co-operatives include Heritage Co-operative (Minnedosa, MB), Mountain Equipment Co-operative (Vancouver, BC) and Arctic Co-operative Limited (Northern Canada) (Co-operatives Registrar, 2003).

#### **Worker/Employment**

The purpose of worker/employment co-operatives is to provide the workers, who are the members, with employment. The members not only work in and own the co-operative, they are also responsible for managing the co-operative.

Examples of worker/employment co-operatives include Co-operative Taxi companies, Natural Cycle Workers Co-operative (Winnipeg, MB) and Moberley Consulting Worker Co-op (Boissevain, MB) (Co-operatives Registrar, 2003).

#### **Housing**

Providing affordable and high quality housing for members is the purpose of housing co-operatives. Many housing co-operatives are organized to meet the needs of specific groups in society such as seniors, students, ethnic groups and special language groups. Housing co-operative members participate in the

operation of their co-operative through involvement with committees, the Board of Directors and other aspects of the co-operative. Sometimes housing co-operatives can be classified as a sub-category of consumer/retail co-operatives.

Examples of housing co-operatives include Aspen Woods (Brandon, MB), Spirit Sands (Glenboro, MB) and Northern Harmony (Thompson, MB) (Co-operatives Registrar, 2003).

### **Service**

This type of consumer co-operative is primarily organized to provide the members with a specific service. Services may range from health care and medical services to water supply or natural gas supply.

Examples of service co-operatives include North Cypress Energy (Carberry, MB), Catfish Creek Water (Lac du Bonnet, MB) and Border Valley Water (Winkler, MB) (Co-operatives Registrar, 2003).

### **Financial**

Financial co-operatives are commonly referred to as credit unions, caisse populaires, trust and insurance co-operatives. They are all co-operatives that operate in the financial services area. They provide members with the opportunities such as savings, loans and mortgages.

Examples of financial co-operatives include Desjardins (Montréal, QC), Westoba Credit Union (Brandon, MB) and the Co-operators Insurance (across Canada) (Co-operatives Registrar, 2003).

## ***Canadian Co-operative Overview***

Some twenty years after the incorporation of the Rochdale principles, the co-operative movement was initiated in Canada (Shaffer, 1999). As a mutual fire insurance company for the community of Stellarton, Nova Scotia, the Stellarton Co-operative was formed in 1861. The co-operative movement quickly expanded to other sectors in Canada; producer co-operatives in 1876, consumer co-operatives in 1885 and financial co-operatives/credit unions in 1990 (Shaffer, 1999; Shufang & Apedaile, 1998).

Currently in Canada there are over 6,000 registered co-operatives with an estimated membership of 15 million (Canadian Co-operative Association, 2003a). Approximately one third, 4.8 million, of the co-operative membership resides in non-urban Canada (McCagg, 2002). In 2000, the revenue of Canadian co-operatives exceeded 30 billion dollars (McCagg, 2002).

## **Co-operatives and Communities**

Today, co-operatives exist in all communities regardless of population, language or ethnicity. Co-operatives are situated in rural, northern, remote and urban environments. The benefits for both the members and the community generated from a co-operative include:

- creates employment opportunities,

- provides services that may otherwise not be available,
- builds, or attributes to, a community identity, and
- prevents leakage of a community's disposable income.

Northern and Aboriginal leaders are faced with a wide range of fundamental issues as they attempt to create a distinct economic, social and political future that they can call their own. Decisions made today will affect countless generations in the future. With limited funds available to communities, they must find a sustainable action plan to circulate financial resources within their communities rather than have it leaked to outside businesses. It is essential for community leaders to have a full and comprehensive understanding of the possible institutions that could be implemented. The co-operative model has the ability to alleviate monetary leakage while improving social and economic conditions.

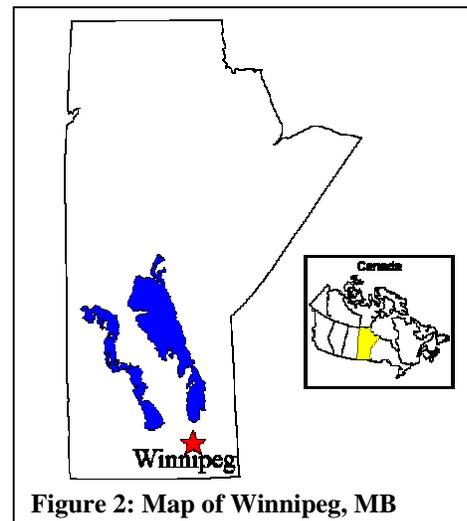
The co-operative value system is synergistic to Aboriginal values of controlling social and economic destinies. The first Aboriginal co-operative was established in the province of Saskatchewan in 1945 and was involved with the commercial fishing sector (Belhadji, 2001). With their continued acceptance as a positive model for economic and social advancement they have provided economic development in the primary, manufacturing, retail, wholesale, finance/business, health, education, hotel and restaurant business sectors. These services when incorporated into the cooperative model allow for the empowerment, social and economic advancement of the Aboriginal people involved. Co-operatives accomplish this goal by stopping leakage, creating employment, and capacity building through the training of local people.

### ***Case Studies of Northern and Aboriginal Co-operatives***

The following three co-operatives show relevant examples of Aboriginal people who see an opportunity to gain social and economic control of their lives and their communities. Each co-operative has gone through and continues to face trials and tribulations that are confidently faced and conquered by their members. Eighty percent of the time, the average Aboriginal co-operative is located in a rural or remote area (Belhadji, 2001). Hence the majority of the co-operatives are located in the northern regions of Canada, mainly in the North West Territories, Nunavut, and northern Quebec.

#### **Neechi Foods Co-operative Limited: Winnipeg, Manitoba**

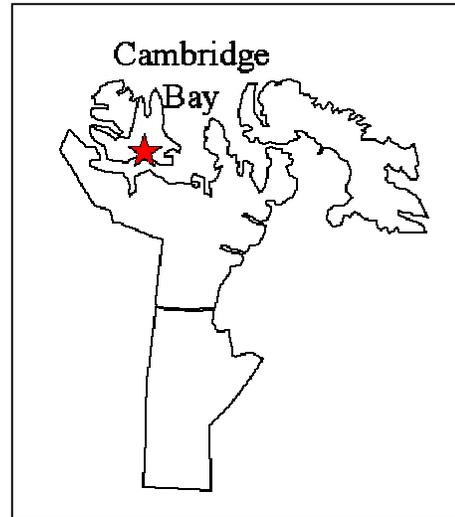
Located on Dufferin Avenue in the north end of the city of Winnipeg is the Neechi Foods Co-operative. The co-operative was formed with the help of the Winnipeg Native Family Economic Development Inc. and began operating in January 1990 (Rothney, 1992). The north end of Winnipeg, according to Statistics Canada, houses the largest urban population of Aboriginals in Canada. Half of the inner city house-holds are below the poverty line and 80% of the Aboriginal households are below the poverty



line (Statistics Canada, 2004). The founding members of the co-operative saw an economic market to supply food to the population after large retail stores left the region. Along with being economically viable the co-operative has positive influences on the social development of the region (Rothney, 1992). The co-operative does this by contributing to economic development aids in the revitalization of Winnipeg's inner-city, a safe and supportive working environment in members taking leadership roles, and a low cost and healthy food supply is available to the population.

### **Ikaluktutiak Co-operative: Cambridge Bay, Nunavut**

Cambridge Bay is located on the southwestern side of Victoria Island in the territory of Nunavut and is home to the Ikaluktutiak Co-operative. The community has around 1,300 residents, of which 80 per cent are Inuit. An Arctic char fishery was started in 1959 using the co-operative model and was officially incorporated as a co-operative in 1967. As early as the 1970's the co-operative was expanded to include retail and groceries (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2001).



**Figure 3: Map of Cambridge Bay, NV**

Although the co-operative has been in operation over 30 years, it had faced difficulties in its early stages. The major hindrance of the co-operative was the availability of funds to finance operations. Government institutions were not forthcoming with funds that were requested. To overcome financial restraints the Ikaluktutiak Co-operative gained access to the large existing northern co-operative network. This system made up of numerous co-operatives is called the Arctic Co-operative Limited (ACL). Arctic Co-operative Limit is owned by forty-two member co-operatives of which Ikaluktutiak is a member. Through this unified voice capital funds in the amount of 10 million dollars was accessed through the Northwest Territories Co-operative Business Fund in 1986. With the infusion of capital the ACL as a whole was able to fend off bankruptcy. Through this avenue Ikaluktutiak was able to overcome financial instability along with economic barriers such as geography, climate, and isolation to become profitable in the last two decades (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2001).

The second barrier facing the Ikaluktutiak Co-operative was access to human resources. There were few community members qualified with the necessary training and education skills to fill the business and management positions to run the co-operative. To fulfill the need for qualified employees the co-operative initially brought in outside managers and other personal to work in Cambridge Bay. Although it's been difficult for Ikaluktutiak to train local community members they've had various success stories through out the past. With help once again from the ACL, community members from Cambridge Bay were able to receive the training they needed to fill managerial positions within the co-operative. It was also noted that once the managers were trained the common trend was to move to better paying government jobs within the region. Due to financial restraints

formal training of community members had been suspended although recent commitments have been made to resume training (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2001).

Members of the co-operative in Cambridge Bay have emphasized that the co-operative should take a lead in educating the general public to make them aware of the numerous benefits. Such actions will increase membership and make the co-operative more economically viable.

The Ikaluktutiak Co-operative has significant positive economic impacts on the community of Cambridge Bay. Employment of community members has been a positive impact from the formation of the co-operative. The retail store currently provides twenty-seven full time positions and twelve part time positions. With such a small and remote population the employment provided by the co-operative has a major impact on the community. The co-operative also plays a major role in recycling capital within the community. Profits that are generated by the co-operative are reinvested into the business and paid out in the form of patronage. Businesses not owned by the community do not provide the same economic benefits (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2001).

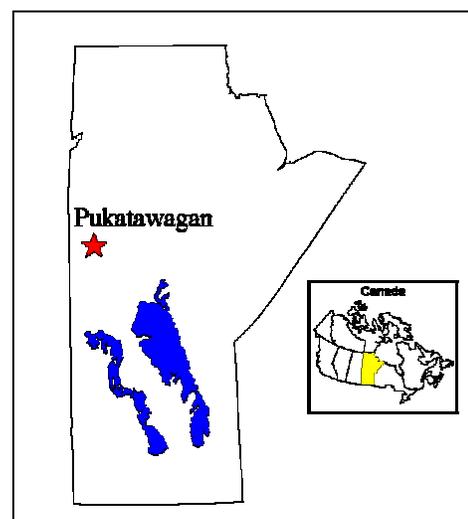
The co-operative has also made a positive social impact on the community of Cambridge Bay. Each co-operatives member has one vote, which gives members the power to make their own decisions on how the co-operative should be, run. Cultural traditions such as fishing, hunting, and arts and crafts are supported and reflected within the co-operative. Elders in the community have played an important part in ensuring the success of the co-operative by endorsing memberships and organizing community members (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2001).

The future for the Cambridge co-operative moving in a positive direction. Expansion plans for products and services area being contemplated, include a fast food outlet and a new retail store building.

### **Akochikan Co-operative: Pukatawagan, Manitoba**

The Akochikan Co-operative is located in the isolated Cree community of Pukatawagan in northern Manitoba. Within the community of Pukatawagan is the home of the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation. The community has a population of around 1,680 residents. The co-operative is considered relatively new and was incorporated in 1995. Originally the co-operative opened as only a retail outlet but now consists of a forty-seat restaurant and a gas bar (Arctic Co-operatives Limited, 2004).

The beginnings of the Akochikan Co-operative started with interested community members approaching the Arctic Co-operatives Limited for assistance in establishing a retail store in Pukatawagan. The idea of the members owning



**Figure 4: Map of Pukatawagan, MB**

the store was the most crucial aspect of choosing the co-operative model. The presence of committed initial members was one of the leading factors in the success of the co-operative. Community meetings were held to educate and inform other community members and youth on the benefits of a co-operative system.

Along with the Ikaluktutiak Co-operative, Akochikan has faced and continues to face economic and human resource issues. With no human resources in Pukatawagan, ACL was given the initial task of interviewing and hiring a manager with training and experience for the co-operative. The direction the co-operative had taken was to train two local community members to fulfill the managerial staffing positions. An important aspect was to find someone fluent in Cree and English so communication between older community members would also be possible. The co-operative board emphasized that a local manager would be more in touch with local community culture and increase the comfort level of customers using the co-operative. When-ever possible the co-operative will support local business and encourages local employment. Although community co-operative training and education is important to the Akochikan Co-operative there are financial restraints on funding for this endeavour (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2001).

The Akochikan Co-operative also contributes to the social health of the community. It donates money to various charity groups and supports the sale of native art with the co-operative itself being a purchaser. Youth involvement is also an important issue, with youth being hired to work with in the co-operative and the target of education reiterating the benefits of the co-operative movement. Elders in the area see the role of the co-operatives as a way for the community to develop further self-sufficiency in social and economic conditions. Women also play an important part in the co-operative. Since its inception membership of women has been increasing and currently four people of the seven-member co-operative board are women (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2001).

Presently the Akochikan Co-operative is in the process of building a new operations facility. Financing for this endeavour was coordinated by the Arctic Co-operatives Development fund. The Mathias Colomb Cree Nation and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada have also pledged money towards the project, although a large percentage of the money needed is being borrowed from the Peace Hills Trust, an Aboriginal owned financial institution. While funding has been obtained for this project the co-operative expresses the importance of managing funds wisely to ensure financial stability. Other economic development projects being considered by the co-operative include a fishing co-operative and a commercial forestry operation. The Akochikan Co-operative also stresses the most integral part of a co-operative in its infancy stage is the hiring of an experienced manager who will be committed to the business and work for the community to see people and children benefit (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

Through the development of the co-operative movement, from Rochdale to current co-operatives in northern Manitoba, there has been a large emphasis on community. By virtue of their principles, co-operatives have a concern for their respective communities. The general benefits of co-operatives are numerous and specific benefits are always unique to the needs and desires of the co-operative's members in each community. The

three case studies discussed in this paper demonstrate the impact that co-operatives have played in the communities of Winnipeg, Pukatawagan and Cambridge Bay.

As a response to industrialization, the structure and philosophies of co-operatives are conducive to mutual self-benefit of members. Historically co-operatives provided services that increased the quality of life for their members. Often these services or products were either unaffordable or unavailable in their communities. As the co-operative movement grew in popularity it grew beyond the traditional consumer services provided by Rochdale. Today co-operatives are found in employment, service, financial and housing sectors of the economy.

Co-operatives have and continue to play an important role in northern and Aboriginal communities. Co-operatives provide an institution to improve social and economic conditions for their members and their community.

## **Acknowledgements**

This report and project could not have been completed without the financial and in-kind contributions of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives, the following Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC): Niecom, Cedar Lake, Parkland and Winnipeg River Brokenhead and the Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

For further information on the Joint Co-operative Development Project, please visit [www.brandonu.ca/rdi/jcdp](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/jcdp).

## References

- Arctic Co-operative Limited (2004). *Kewatin/Kivalliq region co-ops: Akochikan*. Retrieved June 2, 2004, from [http://www.arcticco-op.com/co-op\\_location.html?list=002-2016-](http://www.arcticco-op.com/co-op_location.html?list=002-2016-).
- Belhadji, B. (2001). *Socio-economic profile of aboriginal co-operatives in Canada*. Ottawa ON: Co-operatives Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.
- Bruce, D. (2000). Building a CED movement in Canada: A policy framework to scale up CED in Canada. In D. Bruce & G. Lister (Eds.), *Rising tides: Community development, tools, models, and processes* (pp. 69-82). Sackville NB: Rural and Small Town Programme, Mount Allison University.
- Canadian Co-operative Association (2003a). *The power of co-operation* [Brochure]. Ottawa ON: Author.
- Canadian Co-operative Association (2003b). *What is a co-operative?* [Brochure] Ottawa ON: Author.
- Co-operatives Registrar (2003). *Directory of Manitoba co-operatives, 2003*. Winnipeg MB: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.
- Co-operatives Futures Directions Project (1982). *Patterns and trends of Canadian co-operative development*. Saskatoon SK: Co-operative College of Canada.
- Co-operatives Secretariat (2003). *What is a co-operative?* [Brochure]. Ottawa ON: Co-operatives Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.
- Craig, J. (1980). *Philosophy, principles and ideologies of co-operatives: What are their implications for a vision of the future?* Saskatoon SK: Co-operative College of Canada.
- Fairbairn, B., Axworthy, C., Fulton, M., Ketilson, L., & Laycock, D. (1990). Co-operative Institutions: Five disciplinary perspectives. In M. Fulton (Ed.), *Co-operative organizations and Canadian society: Popular institutions and the dilemmas of change* (pp. 13-38). Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Fairbairn, B., Bold, J., Fulton, M., Ketilson, L., & Ish, D. (1991). *Co-operative organizations and community development: Economics in social perspective*. Saskatoon SK: Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan.
- Fulton, M. & Laycock, D. (1990). Introduction. In M. Fulton (Ed), *Co-operative organizations and Canadian society: Popular institutions and the dilemmas of change* (pp. 3-12). Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Holyoake, G. (1908). *The history of co-operation*. London UK: T. Fisher Unwin.
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (2001). *Aboriginal co-operatives in Canada: Case studies*. Ottawa ON: Minister of Public Works and Government Services of Canada.
- McCagg, L. (2002). *Co-operatives in Canada (2000 Data)*. Ottawa ON: Co-operatives Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Melnyk, G. (1985). *The search for community: From utopia to a co-operative society*. Montreal QC: Black Rose Books.

Rothney, R. (1992). *Neechi Foods Co-op Ltd.: Lessons in community development*. Winnipeg MB: Neechi Food Co-op Ltd. And Winnipeg Native Family Economic Development (WNFED).

Shaffer, J. (1999). *Historical dictionary of the cooperative movement*. London UK: The Scarecrow Press.

Shufang, Z. & Apedaile, L. (1998). *Co-operative organizations in rural Canada and the agricultural co-operative movement in China: A comparison*. Saskatoon SK: Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan.

Statistics Canada (2004). *2001 community profile of Winnipeg*. Retrieved June 12, 2004, from <http://www.statcan.ca>.

## **Appendix A: Co-operative Glossary**

### *Articles of Incorporation*

Official document required for incorporation. States the co-operative's name, purpose, share structure, directors and incorporators (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

### *Board of Directors*

Body elected by the members to direct the business, policy and operations of a co-op. All members could be on the board, but usually the membership is too large to meet to consider all decisions (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

### *Business Plan*

Guide for managing the co-operative, setting its organizational structure, determining necessary shares/capital, obtaining financing, identifying necessary facilities and equipment and measuring progress (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

### *Capital*

Total funds invested in a co-operative to enable it to conduct business (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

### *Community Economic Development (CED)*

A comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy conceived and directed locally, for the revitalization and renewal of community economies (Bruce, 2000)

### *Consumer Co-operative*

A legally incorporated organization that is developed, owned and controlled by and for its members. Established to provide members with goods or services, or to make joint use of available resources to improve member's social or economic conditions (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

### *Co-operative*

An autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise

### *Credit Union (or Caisse Populaires)*

Provide a variety of financial services such as savings, investments and loans (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

### *Employment Co-operative (or Workers Co-operative)*

Provide employment to the worker-members who produce and/or market their goods or services through the co-operative (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

### *Equity*

The difference between the value of assets and liabilities (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

*International Co-operative Alliance*

The international association of national co-operative councils/associations (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

*Marketing or Produce Co-operatives*

Co-operatives established to support members' efforts to sell their produce (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

*Member*

An individual who has met the conditions of membership stated without discrimination, to anyone who can use its services (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

*Patronage Refund*

Net savings are reinvested in a co-operative or are returned to members as patronage dividends, which may be in the form of cash and/or additional shares in the co-operatives (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

*Service Co-operatives*

Provide needed services generally at improved quality price and availability to its members (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

*Share*

One of the equal parts into which a co-operative's capital is divided (Canadian Business Service Centre, 2004)

## Appendix B: Co-operative Websites

The following is a list of co-operative websites that contain useful information. All website address were correct as of 30 October 2004.

British Columbia Institute for Co-operatives Studies, University of Victoria

- <http://web.uvic.ca/bcics/>

Canadian Co-operative Association

- <http://www.coopcanada.coop>

Centre for Co-operative Studies, University of Cork (Ireland)

- [http://www.ucc.ie/acad/foodecon/centre\\_b.html](http://www.ucc.ie/acad/foodecon/centre_b.html)

Center for Cooperatives, University of Wisconsin (USA)

- [www.wisc.edu/uwcc](http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc)

Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan

- <http://coop-studies.usask.ca/>

Co-operative Development Services, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

- [http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/ri/coop\\_index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/ri/coop_index.html)

Co-operative Development Initiative, Co-operatives Secretariat

- [http://www.agr.gc.ca/policy/coop/information\\_e.phtml](http://www.agr.gc.ca/policy/coop/information_e.phtml)

Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada

- <http://www.chfc.ca/eng/chf/home.htm>

Co-operatives Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

- [http://www.agr.gc.ca/policy/coop/home\\_e.phtml](http://www.agr.gc.ca/policy/coop/home_e.phtml)

Coop Zone

- <http://www.coopzone.coop/>

Credit Union Central of Canada

- <http://www.cucentral.ca/>

Federated Co-operative Limited

- <http://www.fcl.ca/>

International Co-operative Alliance

- <http://www.coop.org/>

Manitoba Co-operative Council

- <http://www.coopcouncil.mb.ca/>

National Co-operative Business Association (USA)

- <http://www.ncba.coop/>