



Opening New Doors: multistakeholders and health co-ops

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Presentation objectives

1. Promote greater awareness of the co-op model's potential contributions to meeting:
 1. Needs of diverse stakeholders combining social and economic dimensions;
 2. Health needs especially through the use of a "social determinants of health" approach.
2. Present inspiring examples of co-ops.

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Personal beliefs

- In a society dealing more than ever with strong individualist behaviour, where short term maximum profit became a kind of benchmark and where economic dimension crosses social concern, MSC offer valuable solution to:
 - Empowering citizens;
 - Created social link;
 - Humanize the economy.

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Introduction of the presenter : Jean-Pierre Girard

- Consultant on collective enterprises for more than 25 years;
- University teaching in Quebec and Africa, participation in programs, University of Toronto, Université de Moncton;
- Research mandates, Chaire de coopération Guy-Bernier/UQAM, Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales/UQAM, Institut de recherche et d'éducation pour les coopératives et les mutuelles de l'Université de Sherbrooke;
- Articles, books and book chapters for scientific and general audiences including with OECD;
- Consultant on forward-looking projects in Canada, including:
 - First case of a clinic purchased by a co-op (Aylmer)
 - First establishment of a health co-op in a university setting
- Organization of study missions in France, Spain, Italy and Japan. Participants of mission in Japan became promoters of Hans health practice in Canada (Quebec, Manitoba, New Brunswick)

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Multistakeholders co-ops (MSC): historical back up

- Old concept in co-op tradition: gathering diverse stakeholders around the mission of the co-op;
- Has been historically overpass by single members co-op (consumers, producers and workers);
- The Italy social co-ops re-introduced the tradition of MSC in Western countries during the 70's;
- Others countries follow the example, France, Spain, Portugal, UK, Quebec (Canada), etc.

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Multistakeholders co-ops: definition

- Has two or more types of members, with the rights of each class of membership set out in the coop's rules.
- Avoid confusion with the notion of multipurpose co-op but a MSC can be a multipurpose co-op

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Development of MSC from a global perspective

- Since a few years, orientation of the international co-operative movement moves in the direction of revitalizing the communitarian tradition
- 1995, ICA recognition of the seventh principle: Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members

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MSC and Global economy

- Multinational firms and global players restructure their enterprises in search of best conditions for profit making, irrespective of negative side effects for others (workers, consumers, citizens) leaving the inhabitants of villages and small towns without employment and basic services (shops, banks, schools, public transport) turning workers settlements into settlements of unemployed. (Hans Münkner, 2004)
- How can we keep a strong link between the economy and the territory or the root with the community alive?

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MSC and Demographic changes

- Low birth-rates and extended life expectancy combined with medical and pharma-drug progress have provoked a dramatic demographic change in our society: despite immigration flux, society is aging more and more.
- This development is accompanied by growing individualism, loosening of family structures, single household of young professional, abandoning traditional patterns of family care for the handicapped and for the elderly, relying more and more on the public security system. (Hans Münkner)
- But the public system will be supported by fewer active contributors!!

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MSC and Role of the State

- How can we combine budgetary cuts and expanding needs, especially on the social and health services side?
- The emergence of a widespread perception that the traditional roles and responsibilities of governments are inadequate to meet the pressing challenges facing our society. "The Co-op Alternative: Civil Society and the Future of Public Services, 2001"

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The added value of the MSC

- This kind of organization has been sparked by local actors;
- The organization depends on they voluntary and joint involvement;
- The capital of the organization, indivisible et inalienable, cannot be delocalised;
- The size of the organization was generally at the scale of the territory;
- The development of the organization was under the hands of the members, in respect of the principle one member, one vote.

Draperi (2003)

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The added value of the MSC

- Multi-stakeholder cooperatives pursue a compromise among diverse stakeholders and intend to manage the diversity of interests under a superior interest (the one gathering the members at the stage of the creation of the cooperative).

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2 examples of MSC

- The Italian social co-op
- The Quebec solidarity co-op

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The Italian social co-op

- Law N. 381/1991 stated that the goal of social cooperatives is to pursue the general interest of the community in promoting personal growth and in integrating people into society by providing social, welfare and educational services (A type cooperatives) and carrying out different activities for the purposes of providing employment for disadvantaged people (B type cooperatives)

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The Italian social co-op

- 9000 SC, 327K jobs (December 31, 2009)
- Growth of 60% in a period of 7 years
- Different association of SC
- Federsolidarietà (Confcoop)= 5600 SC: (67% coop A, 32,7% coop B)
- 200K jobs and 210 K associates members
- Business turnover of 5,2 G € (2010)

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The Italian social co-op

- Factors of success:
 - Legal recognition;
 - Strong linkage with the community;
 - Importance of voluntary contribution;
 - Horizontal development strategy;
 - Support for business development of consortium;
 - Specialized fund.

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The Quebec solidarity co-op

- The amendments to the Cooperatives Act in 1997
- "The solidarity cooperative concurrently consolidates members who are users, services offered by the cooperative, and members who are workers of the cooperative. Moreover, any other person or company who has an economic or social interest in attaining the objective of the cooperative can also be a member of the cooperative. This member is hereafter named a "supporting member"

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The Quebec solidarity co-op

- **Capitalization** :the number of the parts that a member can hold can vary according to whether the member is a user, a worker, or a supporting member
- **Composition of the board of directors:** The Act ensures that each of these groups has at least one representative on the board of directors. The cooperative can determine the number of members per group, but the Act stipulates a ceiling of a third of the directors originating from the group of supporting members if, this category exists within the cooperative

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The Quebec solidarity co-op

- **Patronage refund** : the patronage refund is limited to users and workers members without possibility for supporting members
- **Change in 2005:**
 - The member base: The SC is a cooperative consisting of at least two categories of members among chosen users, workers and supporting members. There is no longer the obligation to constitute the cooperative with user and worker members;
 - A person cannot belong to more than one category of members in the cooperative. For example, an employee who used to be both a worker member and a user member can now only belong to one category.

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The Quebec solidarity co-op

| Year established | Cooperatives established | Solidarity cooperatives established | | Active solidarity cooperatives | |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| | | N ^o | % | N ^o | % |
| 1997* | 127 | 25 | 19,7 | 20 | 80,0 |
| 1998 | 189 | 32 | 16,9 | 16 | 50,0 |
| 1999 | 185 | 48 | 25,9 | 20 | 41,7 |
| 2000 | 169 | 46 | 27,2 | 8 | 25,8 |
| 2001 | 142 | 31 | 21,8 | 12 | 38,7 |
| 2002 | 169 | 38 | 22,5 | 15 | 39,5 |
| 2003 | 220 | 52 | 23,6 | 19 | 36,5 |
| 2004 | 115 | 34 | 29,6 | 17 | 50,0 |
| 2005 | 131 | 43 | 32,8 | 28 | 65,1 |
| 2006 | 157 | 83 | 52,9 | 54 | 65,1 |
| 2007 | 150 | 92 | 61,3 | 51 | 58,0 |
| 2008 | 132 | 79 | 59,8 | 34 | 59,7 |
| 2009 | 132 | 81 | 61,4 | 35 | 52,8 |
| 2010 | 116 | 70 | 60,3 | 48 | 71,1 |
| Total | 2134 | 754 | 35,3 | 686 | 67,9 |

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The Quebec solidarity co-op: social cohesion research project

- **Territory:** As in the rest of North America, the territory to which one belongs is being defined in a new framework of space. Do solidarity cooperatives fit into this new framework, or do they still operate according to the traditional framework, which in Québec was the Catholic parish?
- **Accessibility:** In general, solidarity cooperatives are set up to facilitate access to new products or services, or to improve access to existing ones, for current and future members. Do they truly serve their purpose? If so, in what ways? Do they remain open to the expression of new needs?

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The Quebec solidarity co-op: social cohesion research project

- **Employability:** Workers can be one of the SC member categories. Therefore, in principle, focus can be given in order to improve their situation. Are the working conditions of jobs created by solidarity cooperatives comparable to or better than those of jobs in similar organizations?
- **Degree of democracy:** Based on the general idea of "one member, one vote", the cooperative model is already open to economic democracy. Does the solidarity cooperative make improvements in this avenue? What type of democratic process is favoured in the SC? Is it a representative democracy, a direct or a deliberative one?
- **Connectedness:** This notion also refers to the one of networking. In principle, the presence of numerous stakeholders opens the door to intense networking. On what basis of social networks was the SC created? Since its start up, what is its contribution in developing social ties among the various individual and collective stakeholders, particularly the different categories of members?

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The Quebec solidarity co-op: social cohesion

| Name and year of establishment | Place, population and location | Services and/or products offered | Data on membership and cost of qualifying shares |
|---|---|---|---|
| Coopérative de solidarité en aide domestique Dominus-Roy (1997) | St-Félicien Pop. 10,622 Lake St. John | - Home care services - Assistance in daily activities - Personal assistance | As of March 2003: 1,182 user members (105) 99 worker members (209) 18 supporting members (1008) |
| Coopérative de solidarité des services de Saint-Camille -also called La Corvée (1993) | St-Camille Pop. 440 Eastern Townships | - Access to alternative medicine professionals - Educational entertainment services | As of February 2005: 43 user members (2509) 3 worker members (2508) 15 supporting members (2508) |
| Coopérative de solidarité récréosportive que du Mont-Adstock (1998) | Adstock Pop. 2,399 Chaudière-Appalaches | - Mountain offering downhill sports (ski and snowboard) and other activities including snowshoeing and hiking - Takeoff areas for hang gliding and paragliding | As of June 2003: 405 user members including: - 373 leisure members (205) - 34 business members (5,000\$ and +) 1 worker member (1,000\$) 9 supporting members (10,000\$) |
| Coopérative de solidarité en alimentation saine L'Épicerie du Rousselle (1999) | Steink-Perceé Pop. 3,443 Lower St. Lawrence | - Health food retail store - Coffee shop - Courses and training sessions | As of February 2003: 274 user members (100\$) 4 worker members (100\$) 12 supporting members (100\$) |

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The Quebec solidarity co-op: social cohesion

- In general, solidarity cooperatives have a significant, and in some cases, very significant contribution to the various dimensions of social cohesion, with one exception: the degree of democracy.

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Conclusion

Cooperatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility

United-Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
(in preparation of 2012 International year of co-operatives)

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