

The Association of Cooperative Educators presents

# CLIMATE, COOPERATIVES *and* RESILIENCE

MAGA FLOWER

COQUI FROG



**Institute**  
**7-10 August, 2023**  
in San Juan, Puerto Rico

To contact us:

[www.ace.coop](http://www.ace.coop)  
[info@ace.coop](mailto:info@ace.coop)

# Welcome Note From Our Chairman

Dear ACE members and guests,

On behalf of the board of directors, welcome to the 2023 Institute of the Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE)!

And welcome to Puerto Rico! Many thanks to ACE board member Jaime Cuevas, who has been active in Puerto Rican co-ops for decades and helped organize this gathering. This year also marks the 150th anniversary of the co-op movement in Puerto Rico, which we will honor here.



This Institute marks our fourth visit to Puerto Rico and our first since 2013. Cooperators from the US mainland, Canada, and elsewhere have much to learn from our hosts. Our theme—Climate, Cooperatives, and Resilience—speaks to this. Faced with a colonial economic system as well as multiple climate threats, cooperatives are leading the way to building a more resilient Puerto Rico—and a more democratic and just economy.

In the coming days, I look forward to the contributions from our speakers and participants. This is an opportunity to hone vital skills to help cooperatives better address climate change, build new economic solutions, and do so with long-term resiliency in mind.

Speaking of resiliency, this conference also takes place in the wake of a pandemic that killed millions and left millions more with chronic illness. This year marks the first full-scale, in-person conference hosted by ACE since 2019. It is great to be back together. But we also recognize the pain the pandemic has wrought. The theme of resiliency has never been more important.

For over 70 years, the Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE), too, has been resilient. We are a small but mighty network of cooperative educators and developers—based throughout the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and beyond.

But we are not standing pat. At this Institute, we will begin to set goals for 2024 through 2026—and beyond. At our annual general meeting, we will ask you to weigh in and tell us what you see as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing ACE—and what you see as priorities ACE ought to take on in the years ahead.

Thank you for making the trip to Puerto Rico—and for lending your voice to this vital international conference gathering. Let us come together and cooperate!

**STEVE DUBB**  
President of the Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Dubb".

# Our Organization

The Association of Cooperative Educators ([www.ace.coop](http://www.ace.coop)), incorporated in 1969, is an international non-profit organization that aims to convene co-operative educators, and to strengthen cooperatives and the cooperative movement by promoting innovative educational content and practices to social and economic changes. ACE provides its members a forum to highlight programs and practices that increase understanding, innovation and professionalism in cooperative education. ACE has members all across the United States, Canada and the Caribbean.

ACE benefits cooperative education and the cooperative movement by:

1. Promoting cooperative research.
2. Developing linkages between universities, cooperatives and supporting organizations.
3. Building capacity to support the development of innovation and acumen in cooperatives.
4. Spreading the word by providing resources on cooperative education.
5. Celebrating the diversity of the co-operative movement.





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# Agenda

August 7-10, 2023  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

To find out which languages are spoken during the sessions and what interpretation is available, go to the Sessions Insights section.

To know more about the details of the bus travels during the week, go to the Important & Useful Information section.

Monday  
August 7, 2023  
Hotel Verdanza

## Day 1

5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
**Institute Check-in**  
• Lobby

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
**Welcome Reception**  
• Aria + 8th Floor Terrace



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## CLIMATE, COOPERATIVES and RESILIENCE



Tuesday  
August 8, 2023  
EDP University (except breakfast and dinner)

## Day 2

7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.  
**Continental Breakfast**  
• Grand Opera Foyer

8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.  
**Institute Check-in**  
• Lobby

9:20 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.  
**Welcome to the ACE Institute: Opening remarks**  
• Salón de Actos

9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.  
**Plenary session - Puerto Rico Co-ops: Meeting the Challenge of Resilience**  
*José Julián Ramírez Ruiz*  
• Salón de Actos

10:45 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.  
**Coffee break - Poster Hall - Networking**  
• Salón de Actos

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
**Ears to the Ground, Eyes to the Sky: Lessons From the Land and Young QTBIPOC Cooperative Leaders**  
*Ayano Jeffers-Fabro, Ab Banks, Paulina Rodríguez Ruiz*  
• Salón 410

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
**Puerto Rican Climate Smart Coffee, d.b.a. Café del Futuro**  
*Marcus Laws, Iris Janette Rodriguez, Christian Rivera-Goyco, Franco Jiménez Sanabria*  
• Salón de Actos

12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
**Lunch**  
• Salón de Actos

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.  
**How Cooperatives Can Build Economic, Social, and Community Resiliency Through Cooperative Capital**  
*Christina Jennings, René A. Vargas Martínez, Esther J. West*  
• Salón de Actos

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.  
**EmprendeCoop: Towards an economy for life**  
*Dr. Carlos Vazquez Riviera, Mayra Nieves Rosa, Jaime Cuevas, Indira B. Medina Córdova*  
• Salón 410

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
**Measuring the Impact of Doing Good**  
*Isabelle Stein*  
• Salón 410

- 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
**Building a Sustainable Puerto Rico from Cooperatives and their Communities**  
*Dr. Frances Figarella García, Lorena Franco*
  - Salón de Actos
- 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
**Coffee break - Poster Hall - Networking**
  - Salón de Actos
- 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
**How Can Agricultural Coops Become Models in the Fight Against Climate Change?**  
*Pascal Billard*
  - Salón 410
- 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
**Co-op Education Challenges for developing Co-ops with Incarcerated and Previously Incarcerated people**  
*Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Lymarie Nieves Plaza, Alan Vicens Lugo*
  - Salón de Actos
- 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
**Building a Resilient Worker Cooperative Ecosystem in Madison, Wisconsin**  
*Charity Schmidt, Frida Ballard, Rek Kwawer*
  - Salón 401
- 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.  
**Discover Puerto Rican Food Buffet**
  - Grand Opera

- 7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.  
**Continental Breakfast**
  - Aria
- 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.  
**ACE Annual General Meeting**
  - Grand Opera
- 10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
**Co-op tour + Mobile Learning Sessions**
- 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
**ACE Banquet | Awards Ceremony | Silent Auction**
  - Grand Opera
- 10:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.  
**Live Music**
  - Grand Opera

- 7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.  
**Continental Breakfast**
  - Aria
- 9:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.  
**Workshop for a Co-op Climate Action Plan**  
*Esther J. West, Gary Hampton*
  - Grand Opera Foyer
- 9:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.  
**How Cooperative Developers Support Resilient Communities?**  
*Alex Stone, Bijiibah Begaye, Charity Schmidt, Adrian Roman, Tamah Yisrael*
  - Grand Opera
- 10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.  
**Coffee break - Poster Hall - Networking**
  - Grand Opera Foyer
- 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
**Is the Cooperative Identity Facilitating Sustainability Strategies and Results: the Case of Funeral Cooperatives in Quebec**  
*Michel Lafleur*
  - Grand Opera Foyer
- 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
**Life Centered Learning Reimagining Technical Assistance and its Role in Emerging Co-op Ecosystems**  
*Johan Matthews*
  - Grand Opera
- 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
**Lunch - Open mic**
  - Grand Opera Foyer

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## Speakers



### Our Keynote Speaker **José Julián Ramírez Ruiz**

José Julián Ramírez Ruiz, M.A. has been the Executive Director for Fondo de Inversión y Desarrollo Cooperativo (FIDECOOP, Cooperative Investment, and Development Fund) since mid-August 2020. FIDECOOP is a cooperative development loan fund, not-for-profit venture capital, and a cooperative business accelerator. For nearly six years, he served as Executive Director of the Association of Cooperative Executives of Puerto Rico, where he led the continuing education program for credit union managers and advocated for credit unions and the cooperative business model.

José has a bachelor's degree in social sciences and a master's in social communication from the University of Puerto Rico. He also has postgraduate studies in cooperative management from Mondragon Unibertsitatea in the Vasque Country, Spain. He has been a cooperative founder and served as a professor in several universities. José also worked for seven years in the League of Cooperatives of Puerto Rico, overseeing the educational program and several cooperative development initiatives.

In 2011, he was awarded the William Hlushko Award by the Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE) for his work as a cooperative educator. In 2014, José was honoured by the League of Cooperatives of Puerto Rico as an Achievement Prize awardee.

José is a Cooperative Development Educator certified by the Credit Union Development Education Program hosted by the International Centre for Co-operative Management (ICCM) in the Sobey School of Business, Saint Mary's University, NS, Canada. In addition, he was certified as an incubator manager by the International Business Innovation Association (InBIA) and approved for Community Micro Businesses Incubation (iMECs) by ConsultCom, among other professional courses.



## Frida Ballard

Frida is a worker organizer with Worker Justice Wisconsin, which works to develop worker cooperatives and organize non-union workplaces. In the last year, Worker Justice Wisconsin, along with MDCDC, MadWorC, WWBIC, and the Madison Public Library, has begun a cooperative incubation program for worker-owned cooperatives, specifically targeting Latine immigrant workers. Together, WJW and the partner organizations educate and fund the workers from formation until the launch of their business to ensure the success of new cooperatives.

Frida is also developing a new Latine-focused housing cooperative in Madison called Zapata. Frida is interested in expanding cooperatives in the Latine community, in housing and worker cooperatives.



## Bijiibah Begaye

As Cooperative Catalyst's Executive Director, Bijiibah helps to build generative partnerships, develop new co-op curriculum and training, and is leading the organization's work to organize and expand CCNM's cooperative development and ecosystem-building efforts in communities across the Southwest. A true believer in supporting community at every stage of development, prior to joining the leadership team at CCNM, Bijiibah served as the Executive Director of Tse Ko Community Development Corporation and as a Program Director for the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension.

## Ab Banks

Ab is a non-conforming (in every way) healer and farmer. They're a deep advocate for complete self-sustainability. Born in Oakland, they embody the heart of the Black Panthers. They were the first member to join People's Program back in 2017, believing in the mission and getting it out of the mud. They rock with The Republic of New Afrika; freeing the land and the people is their top priority, alongside healing the people! They care about creating sovereignty from an intersectional standpoint, pushing folks that experience multiple oppressions to the forefront in leading us to liberation... letting love lead the way. No one is free until we are all free.



## Jaime Cuevas

He holds a bachelor's degree and an associate's degree from St. John Vianney University in Miami. He served as Marketing Manager of Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples de Puerto Rico for 27 years. He also served as Manager of the Cooperative Educational Services Department, Branch Manager and Cooperative Promotional Educator. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce. For four years he served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Association for Cooperative Educators. He was a promoter of the new law of Energy Cooperatives in Puerto Rico. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors REMCOOP, a worker cooperative that provides a variety of renewable energy services.

## Pascal Billard

Pascal Billard obtained his bachelor's degree in agronomic sciences, with a specialization in business management, in France. He is President and CEO of SOL-AIR Consultants, a company supporting organizations in agrifood and circular economy with feasibility studies, market surveys and business plans to start and expand their business. Deeply involved in the cooperative movement, he has helped set up numerous cooperatives, mainly in the agricultural and agri-food sectors. He is vice president of CoopZone, the Canadian network of cooperative developers, and a director of Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada.



## Dr. Frances Figarella García

She is a former high school chemistry and elementary science teacher. She is a founding member of CoopERA and is the Executive Director of this cooperative. CoopERA offers experiential training, technical assistance and mentoring to empower and connect people to cooperative and sustainability practices under the framework of the Social and Solidarity Economy. Frances is part of the Board of Directors of the Social and Solidarity Economy Network of PR, which was formed in 2019. She is part of the Popular Education Team of VAMOS, collaborating member of the educators of the Education Network for Sustainable Development (Red de Educación para el Desarrollo Sostenible, Redes or RCE Puerto Rico), affiliated to the Grupo ODS Puerto Rico, founder of the Collective of educators and cooperative educators of Latin America and the Caribbean, and recently a member of the international group Catalyst 2030.



## Lorena Franco

She is an economist, partner at CoopERA and multidisciplinary artist. In 2016 she graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a major in economics and marketing along with a minor in international trade. After working in New York as an economist with a focus on Latin America, she began her graduate studies at the School of Economics in Barcelona in 2018. There she conducted her research on topics such as the impact of colonization, institutions, and gender inequality. At the end of 2019 she returned to Puerto Rico to work as an economist at Estudios Técnicos where she specialized in socioeconomic analysis for the non-profit, public and private sectors. She recently joined CoopERA as a partner in order to continue building a Puerto Rico grounded in cooperativism and solidarity economy.



## Gary Hampton

Gary W. Hampton is an expert on organizational development, fundraising and community-based economic development. He advises, trains and coaches businesses and nonprofit organizations on strategic growth and development. Hampton has nearly two decades of experience in IT and strategic development across different industry sectors (Technology, Financial, Government, Private, Non-profit, Retail, Education). He is also active in community-based cooperative economic development and a member owner of the Ajani Group Cooperative. Hampton is a passionate cooperative and community supporter. Mr. Hampton currently sits on the boards of Create WV, Compensation Committee and Association of Cooperative Educators, Vice Chair.

## Jessica Gordon-Nembhard

Author of *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice* (2014), and 2016 inductee into the U.S. Cooperative Hall of Fame, Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Ph.D., is Professor of Community Justice and Social Economic Development, in the Department of Africana Studies, John Jay College, City University of NY. Dr. Gordon-Nembhard is an internationally recognized and widely published political economist specializing in cooperative economics, community economic development and community-based asset building, racial wealth inequality, solidarity economics, Black Political Economy, and community-based approaches to justice. Recipient of numerous awards in social economics and cooperative studies, she is a member of the Cooperative Economics Council of NCBA/CLUSA; the International Co-operative Alliance Committee on Co-operative Research; a Faculty Fellow and Mentor with the Institute for the Study of Employee Ownership and Profit Sharing at Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations; an affiliate scholar with the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives (University of Saskatchewan, Canada); and guest lecturer with the International Centre for Co-operative Management, Sobey School of Business, St. Mary's University (Halifax, NS, Canada). Gordon-Nembhard is also a past board member of the Association of Cooperative Educators; a past fellow with the Center on Race and Wealth at Howard University; and a member and past president of the National Economic Association.



## Ayano Jeffers-Fabro (she/her/sis)

Ayano is a community weaver who is bi-coastally rooted in Waialua, Hawai'i and East Oakland, CA. She was born and raised in rural Waialua, and politicized in the Bay Area. This has given her the insight and experience to bridge urban-rural connections to land, food and the people. Her work centers on Black, Brown and Indigenous leadership, technology, and wisdom. It also supports community self-determination and interconnectivity. Ayano is currently the Education and Curriculum Developer with CoFED, where she facilitates spaces for knowledge exchange guided by decolonial and re-indigenizing praxis.



## Christina Jennings

Christina Jennings joined Shared Capital in 2008 where she provides strategic leadership, oversees lending programs, and leads capitalization and fundraising efforts. Jennings has worked for over twenty years in community development finance in the US and internationally. Prior to joining Shared Capital, Jennings ran a city-wide microfinance program in Minneapolis; provided technical assistance and training to support the development and growth of immigrant-lead nonprofits; and lead two international funds that invested in local microfinance organizations in Latin America. She has also launched and managed small businesses and social ventures. Throughout her career, the focus of her work has been on supporting capacity building, working for economic justice and creating equitable access to capital.



## Franco Jiménez Sanabria

Franco has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Management from the University of Puerto Rico, Humacao campus. He began his career in the Puerto Rican Cooperative Movement in 2012 when he was appointed to the Education Committee of Valencoop, where he belonged to its Board of Directors and chaired the Youth Committee until 2019. Franco currently works at the Liga de Cooperativas de Puerto Rico as Educational Services Officer and Programs and Services Liaison.



## Rek Kwawer

Rek Kwawer is a cooperative educator and developer serving since 2020 as the Coordinator at Madison Workers Cooperative (MadWorC), which is Madison's peer network of worker cooperatives. Prior to getting involved professionally in the worker cooperative world, Rek was the Director of Operations at NASCO (a non-profit, democratic workplace) from 2014-2017 and the Member Services Coordinator at Madison Community Cooperative from 2011-2014. Rek recently completed a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration on Cooperative Organization Administration through UMass Amherst.



## Michel Lafleur

Specialized in cooperative strategic management in context of sustainable development, Michel Lafleur combines expertise in the development and management of training, research and community service programs, with solid experience in establishing university partnerships.

He has worked for various international cooperation organizations, supporting the development of university programs and cooperative enterprises. In Quebec, Michel has served and continues to serve on various boards of cooperatives in the funeral, financial, news media, education and cooperative and regional development sectors. He is currently Director of the Centre de formation en environnement et développement durable (CUFE) at the Université de Sherbrooke.



## Marcus Laws

Project Lead Administrator at NCBA CLUSA, Marcus Laws is a multifaceted, bilingual practitioner with 10+ years of experience in cooperative, value chain, and market systems development approaches, primarily in Latin America and the Caribbean. He is an experienced project manager that has provided technical, financial, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and administrative support to a \$50M portfolio of primarily USG-funded projects in the sectors of cooperative development, agriculture and food security, and economic growth and trade.



## Alan Vicéns Lugo

Alan is a coach for incarcerated persons in Puerto Rico's Correctional Institutions and the writer of *Rescatado para Rescatar*, a book that presents his life and his transformation behind bars. He served a sentence of 7 years and 11 months in different prisons in Puerto Rico, convicted of various charges that totalled 12 years. Alan was transformed and began a beautiful journey, which led him to stand out as a good leader inside jail. Inside the Institution, he took courses in business administration, started writing his book, became the 5th ARIGOS COOP president and led the Church. Now he works for an Institution that helps incarcerated persons to transform and go out with the right skills. He's studying his third year in Social Working. He is a Founder of the nonprofit Organization: Impulso Cero, and is a chaplain inside jail.



## Johan Matthews

Johan facilitates the development of equitable co-op ecosystems in emerging communities across the northeast. He also provides culturally informed technical assistance to ensure that communities traditionally excluded from economic investment can engage in cooperative enterprise. Johan joins CFNE after over a decade of collaborating with local leaders and institutions to design and implement community-based economic engagement strategies. As a Caribbean immigrant, Johan is especially interested in using cooperatives to create social, racial and economic justice for those who have faced structural barriers to self-determination and shared ownership.





## Indira B. Medina Córdova

She is a History and Spanish teacher and has been teaching high school students in the Department of Education for 25 years. She currently offers the cooperativism course. She is also pursuing a master's degree in Cooperativism at the University of Puerto Rico. She holds two certifications, one in Linguistics and the other in Heritage Interpreter. She is a founding member, interpreter and vice president of the Worker Cooperative CABACOOOP. This cooperative is dedicated to community-based ecotourism in the Las Cabachuelas Natural Reserve in Morovis. There, she is part of the Educational Committee that is in charge of creating a plan that promotes the principles of cooperativism, sustainable development objectives and member training. Since 2017, she has directed the Moroveño Cultural Center, a place that is responsible for protecting, preserving and promoting culture, history and the environment.



## Lymarie Nieves Plaza

Lymarie is a Marketing Manager and Cooperative Educator. With over twenty years of working under the cooperative model, she has always aimed at social responsibility and community work. Her legacy is attached to the project with the ARIGOS Multiple Services Cooperative, incarcerated men of the Guayama Penal Institution 945, where she served as spokesperson, adviser and cooperative educator for the Group. In the same way, she collaborated with the League of Cooperatives of Puerto Rico to develop the Cooperativa Taínas Coop for incarcerated women. Since 2017, she has been the Co-Founder of Impulso Cero Inc, a non-profit organization that works for the inmate community and mission projects. She is a Chaplain for the incarcerated persons in Bayamón and Arecibo Penal Institutions.



## Mayra Nieves Rosa

She holds a master's degree in Cultural Management and a bachelor's degree in Public Communication, both from the University of Puerto Rico. She is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Madre Tierra Cooperative, where she served for four years as an administrator. She has worked at FEMA in different roles: program analyst, philanthropy advisor and emergency management specialist. She served as coordinator in the organization Cauce in the program of Capetillo Community Garden, Nursery and Forest in the community of Río Piedras.



## Camila Piñeiro

Camila Piñeiro Harnecker is the Practice Area Director for the Strengthening Cooperatives and Producer Organizations Practice Area at NCBA CLUSA. Before joining NCBA CLUSA, she was a Cooperative Development Consultant at Keystone Development Center, and a Research Fellow at the Center for Latin American and Latino Studies at American University and the University of California, Riverside. From 2009 to 2017, she was a professor, researcher and consultant at the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy at the University of Havana. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Havana, an MBA from the same alma mater, and a master's degree in Sustainable Development from the University of California at Berkeley. Her work has focused on worker cooperatives, economic democracy and the social and solidarity economy. She is the author of four books and several articles on these topics.

## Christian Rivera-Goyco

Christian is an Assistant Researcher in the Agricultural Experimental Station (AES) of the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez (UPRM), with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Chemical Engineering. He completed his Bachelor's and Doctorate degrees at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez. As a Postdoctoral Researcher (AES-UPRM), he worked with the production and characterization of biochar from different agricultural residues.. His research interests are in the sustainable production and management of agricultural inputs and biomass residues, the sustainable management of natural resources, and the production of value-added chemicals from biomass.



## Iris Janette Rodriguez

She comes from a family of second-generation farm workers. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico. In 2014 she moved back to her hometown of Adjuntas and dedicated herself to rescuing the family farm Finca Yayales by planting coffee and cocoa trees. In addition, along with other farm workers, they dedicated themselves to reorganizing the coffee sector of the Puerto Rico Farm Bureau. Presently she is the Vice President of the Puerto Rico Farm Bureau. She is also President of Productores de Café de Puerto Rico, Inc. (PROCAFE). At PROCAFE, they have worked on several projects to achieve PROCAFE's mission which is to sow in volume and productivity to achieve the socioeconomic sustainability of the coffee growers, their family and community, conserving natural resources for this and future generations





## Paulina Rodríguez Ruiz (they/she)

She is a storyteller, cultural worker and environmentalist currently residing in occupied Tongva (Long Beach) and Yokuts territories (Fresno). Their work is rooted in the belief that stories have the power to transform ourselves, each other and our environment, challenging long held narratives and shaping meaning. Living in the Central Valley amongst oppressive systems that seek to dehumanize land and people, while thriving off the exploitation of both, led them down a path of food sovereignty that centers the liberation of QTBIPOC, indigenous and immigrant folx. In their previous work, they developed a food policy council framework for the city of Fresno, established mutual aid networks amongst QTBIPOC farmers within the Valley, and utilized art, culture and storytelling to create intentional spaces of joy.



## Adrian Roman

He is an educator, facilitator, mediator, community organizer and poet. He has worked as a Cooperative Developer at Boston Center for Community Ownership (BCCO) since 2021 focusing on facilitation, teambuilding, communication and their internal structures. He was led into Cooperative Development from his work as an organizer at a contemplative center in Berkeley, CA. There he designed and led a residential work/study program, trained teachers and led mindfulness workshops internationally.



## Charity Schmidt

As a cooperative development specialist at the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, Charity provides technical assistance to start-up co-ops and facilitates outreach efforts to cooperators and community-based organizations. She coordinates the work of the Madison Cooperative Development Coalition (MCDC), the City of Madison's funded initiative to form worker cooperatives that address income inequality and racial disparities by creating living wage and sustainable jobs. She takes pride in creating spaces for co-op education and coordination, building relationships between entrepreneurs and community organizations, and contributing to community-driven economic development in Madison. She serves on the Board of MadWorC, the Board of Worker Justice WI, the Board of the Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE), and the Board of Shared Capital Cooperative.



## Isabelle Stein

Originally from France, Isabelle moved to Ontario, Canada in 2019. After starting her career in communications and administrative management in Paris, she made a radical professional shift to devote herself to her passion: the emergence of societal models that respect human well-being and the Environment. Since obtaining an MBA in marketing and sustainable development, she has developed a variety of projects in the fields of short circuits, waste reduction, and community needs. In her 4th year at the Cooperation Council of Ontario, she continues to take on new challenges as a capacity building manager with dynamism and creativity.



## Alex Stone

Alex Stone has been the Executive Director of Cooperation Works (CW) since early 2016. She first became involved with co-ops through student housing co-ops at UC Berkeley, where she lived for three years and participated as a house-level manager and board member. She was deeply involved in creating the Berkeley Student Food Collective and was the store's Operations Manager through its first two years. Alex co-founded the Cooperative Food Empowerment Directive and coordinated its first training involving over twenty students from seven universities across the west coast. As ED of CW, she has grown the network, undertaken a redesign of our flagship training for cooperative developers, and cultivated deep ties across the cooperative movement in the US. She is currently enrolled in the Master of Management, Cooperatives, and Credit Unions program at the International Centre for Co-operative Management at St. Mary's University.



## René A. Vargas Martínez

René A. Vargas Martínez is Inclusiv's Director, Puerto Network. René is tasked with advancing financial inclusion for Hispanic and immigrant communities by overseeing the engagement and expansion of a national network of credit unions serving these communities. He also oversees an initiative to build a network of credit unions and cooperatives serving underserved communities in Puerto Rico, supporting their efforts to advance the island's recovery efforts. René has extensive credit union experience at the member level. He worked at Pentagon Federal Credit Union and American Airlines Federal Credit Union. René's work experience and advocacy also extends to the academic world. He served as Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Puerto Rico and as Director of the Office of the Student Ombudsman at the University of Puerto Rico. He also holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Puerto Rico School of Law.





## Dr. Carlos Vazquez Riviera

He currently serves as Executive Manager of EmprendeCoop. He is co-founder and researcher at the International Institute for Community Research and Community Action Institute (INAC) . He was also co-founder of the Cooperativa YukeRe Cooperative, a working cooperative for mental health professionals. He served as Researcher and Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Puerto Rico; he was the founder and Director of the Center for Research and Community Reinforcement Center (CIReC) at the FILIUS Institute. He is the creator of the concept of refortalecimiento: a work strategy that focuses on the strengths of people and communities.



## Esther J . West

Esther West brings a life-long passion for environmental and community development from urban planning, worker-cooperative and academic perspectives. Besides being a Loan Officer at Shared Capital Cooperative and a Lecturer in the Environmental Studies Program at SF State, this proud Xicana/x is a worker-owner and co-founder of Ajani Cooperative, where she supports cooperatives and researches with Dr. Jessica Gordon Nembhard of CUNY. In her previous position as Cooperative Development Specialist at the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, Esther provided technical assistance to cooperative conversions, home care, and other cooperatives, conducted market analysis, and researched Latinx cooperatives, national cooperative development, and created several databases and analytical cooperative maps.



## Tamah Yisrael

Tamah Yisrael is a Business Consultant at Columinate that supports community organizing, community empowerment, and provides financial management services. She established her consulting practice to provide business development, bookkeeping, and management services to small businesses, nonprofits, and social impact enterprises. Her community advocacy efforts are focused on cultural awareness, social justice, and access to healthy foods. She previously served as President of the New Orleans Food Co-op board, which enabled her to bridge the connection in all three of these sectors. She is deeply engaged in the cooperative movement and is the Education and Outreach Coordinator of Cooperation New Orleans Loan Fund, serving on the board of CooperationWorks, and currently working to support the development of National Association of Black Cooperators.





# Sessions Insight

## Puerto Rico Co-ops: Meeting the Challenge of Resilience - Plenary session

Tuesday, August 8 - 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ENG, ES | **Interpretation available in :** ENG>ES, ES>ENG

This conference presents a 30-minute lecture in English, followed by a 30-minute Q&A session with interpretation available in Spanish. The lecture explores the historical journey of the Puerto Rico co-op movement, beginning in 1873 and experiencing a significant third wave in 1946, inspired by the Antigonish movement led by Father Joseph Alexander MacDonald, chosen by Moses Coady. The formation of Fideicoop and the development of the Puerto Rico cooperative ecosystem will be discussed, emphasizing the impact of various crises, such as bankruptcy and Hurricane Maria. The lecture will delve into the victories and challenges faced by co-ops and highlight the remarkable resilience demonstrated by the cooperative ecosystem in Puerto Rico. Join us to gain insights into the rich history and ongoing efforts of Puerto Rico's co-op movement, and discover how these cooperatives continue to navigate challenges and build a resilient future.

## Ears to the Ground, Eyes to the Sky: Lessons From the Land and Young QTBIPOC Cooperative Leaders

Tuesday, August 8 - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ENG

The Democracy at Work Institute & U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives' 2022 report reveals that 47% of worker-owners in U.S. cooperatives identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color, a decrease from 60% in 2019. These cooperators span various sectors, including food and land cooperatives, with a majority (52%) being women and 4% identifying as non-binary. CoFED, in its 12th year, focuses on supporting cooperatives led by marginalized groups impacted by systemic injustices. Their climate justice work centers on the interconnectedness of food, land, and overall well-being. CoFED aims to address the educational and training gaps in food systems and cooperative development for young people, empowering them to create innovative and sustainable solutions for a climate-fragile future.

## Puerto Rican Climate Smart Coffee, d.b.a. Café del Futuro

Tuesday, August 8 - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ENG, ES | **Interpretation available in :** ENG>ES, ES>ENG

NCBA CLUSA proposes the \$15 million USDA Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities project, targeting 2,000 Puerto Rican coffee producers in Utuado, Adjuntas, and Lares. Over four years, the project will implement climate-smart agroforestry practices, reduce costs, and enhance resilience. Led by NCBA CLUSA, a consortium of cooperatives, farmer organizations, and institutions will offer financial incentives, fostering climate-smart markets. Practices include reduced tillage, biochar amendments, and cover crops. Diversifying crops will enhance food security. Partners include PROCAFE, University of Puerto Rico, National Co-op Grocers, La Liga de Cooperativas de Puerto Rico, and SustainCERT. Cooperative alliances, technical assistance, and organic inputs strengthen capacities, improve incomes, and foster a dynamic rural economy. Collaboration with NRCS's Puerto Rico office informs future USDA actions, while La Liga de Cooperativas de Puerto Rico empowers farmer groups to promote climate-smart practices.

## How Cooperatives Can Build Economic, Social, and Community Resiliency Through Cooperative Capital

Tuesday, August 8 - 1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ENG, ES | **Interpretation available in :** ENG>ES, ES>ENG

Shared Capital proposes a workshop on how cooperatives can build economic, social, and community resiliency through cooperative capital. Cooperative capital – money from the cooperative sector, whether from members, other cooperatives, mutual aid, co-op loan funds, or , credit unions–provides stability & solutions during the many shifts going on in in our cooperatives, the economy, society and our earth. We propose reviewing the capital pathway – from how capital can be raised (i.e. impact investors, DPOs, borrowing from loan funds and banks, etc.), to the different structures that can be used, to the many uses and how it can provide a resilient foundation (from climate change resiliency to economic and community resiliency). We hope to bring in a few other panelists to share our various examples within the framework of the cooperative principles and how these provide resiliency. How we move financial resources – i.e., cooperatively – is critical for making meaningful impact and being part of thoughtful, participatory solutions addressing societal shifts and climate change.

## EmprendeCoop: Towards an economy for life

Tuesday, August 8 - 1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ES | **Interpretation available in :** ENG>ES, ES>ENG

EmprendeCoop is a business management and accompaniment unit at FIDECOOP whose goal is to promote the development and growth of new and existing cooperative enterprises through incubation and acceleration processes. Our vision is to accompany cooperative enterprises in the development of an economy for life. Among our objectives include: (1) increasing the number of decent and sustainable jobs, (2) to increase the operating income of the cooperatives, (3) to implement interdisciplinary internship programs for university students, among others.

EmprendeCoop works in three phases: (1) training, (2) accompaniment and mentoring, and (3) evaluation. At EmprendeCoop we promote the implementation of sustainable development objectives regardless of the business area that is promoted by the cooperatives we support.

The objective of this panel is to present some of the examples of cooperative enterprises that actively address issues related to climate change through their business area, namely: Cooperative Madre Tierra (food security), REMCOOP (renewable energy) and CABACOOOP (sustainable tourism). Representatives from these cooperatives will present how their business models contribute to address several of the challenges of climate change in the implementation of an economy for life.

## Measuring the Impact of Doing Good

Tuesday, August 8 - 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** FR | **Interpretation available in :** FR>ENG

The importance of impact has never been questioned. Indeed, it has been measured in the corporate world since day one, but mainly in terms of dollars and cents. Today, people and businesses in all sectors of the economy are waking up and warming to the idea of measuring their impact beyond dollars and cents - for doing good, not only for themselves, but for their communities and for the planet. However, measurement is sometimes complicated, time consuming and challenging to carry out in a consistent manner. In this session, Isabelle Stein, Manager of Capacity Development with the Cooperation Council of Ontario (CCO) will demonstrate the advantages of measuring and improving impact. She will introduce the Sustainable Ontario tool being developed by the CCO for organizations, social enterprises and cooperatives, and their employees, to help them measure and improve their contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

## Building a Sustainable Puerto Rico from Cooperatives and their Communities

Tuesday, August 8 - 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ES | **Interpretation available in :** ES>ENG

This seminar explores the crucial role of cooperatives in fostering a sustainable Puerto Rico. Cooperatives actively engage with communities to implement environmental and social practices for a better future. The Puerto Rican Cooperative Movement's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan emphasizes the commitment to sustainable development. Cooperatives have undertaken initiatives promoting environmental and social sustainability, especially after Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Through knowledge and action, they have created resilient environments. The seminar highlights the importance of education for sustainable development and the adoption of the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda. It emphasizes the urgency and planetary commitments cooperatives must embrace, their leadership in driving sustainability, achievements, future directions, work plans, and the coherence between the cooperative model and sustainable development.

## Life Centered Learning: Reimagining Technical Assistance and its Role in Emerging Co-op Ecosystems

Tuesday, August 8 - 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ENG

«Why didn't I learn about co-ops?» This question is all too common, according to Johan Matthews, a technical assistance provider. Co-operative education is often absent from school, college, and the workplace. Many of us in the field had to discover co-ops through our own lived experiences. During his 10+ years supporting micro and social enterprise development in emerging communities, Matthews noticed a lack of education on the transformative power of co-ops, a deliberate omission. Furthermore, when individuals from emerging communities seek co-op education or assistance, the information often fails to connect with their local culture and experiences. This lack of community-led education puts our emerging co-op ecosystems at risk. However, there is a roadmap to learn about co-op enterprises in emerging communities through the lived experiences of community-minded individuals. Their relatable journeys offer valuable insights for the next generation. This session explores life-centered learning, contrasting it with traditional decontextualized co-op education. It highlights the role of such learning models in fostering resilient co-op ecosystems in emerging communities.



## How Can Agricultural Coops Become Models in the Fight Against Climate Change?

Tuesday, August 8 - 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** FR | **Interpretation available in :** FR>ENG

Cooperatives have always contributed to the development of agriculture, but this activity is too often singled out as a major contributor to global warming. Indeed, agriculture emits greenhouse gases because of the cultivation techniques generally used, the use of fossil energy (manufacture of fertilizers, tractors, trucks...) and intensive breeding techniques. It also consumes a lot of water. However, agricultural cooperatives can contribute to reducing the environmental impact of this activity. Worker-farmer cooperatives are still few in number in Canada, but they generally grow organically. This technique allows for a significant reduction in greenhouse gases. There are also CUMAs which allow members to purchase less polluting high-tech equipment, and in a similar form, the CUMO, which helps to deal with labor shortages, food cooperatives that promote short circuits, thus less transportation, food hubs that combine production and distribution, often to offer organic food, but mainly local food. In addition to contributing to the reduction of global warming, these cooperatives promote the economic development of communities. During this workshop, you will see effective models with concrete examples presented. You will also have the opportunity to share your own experiences to enhance the knowledge of the participants.

## Co-op Education Challenges for developing Co-ops with Incarcerated and Previously Incarcerated people

Tuesday, August 8 - 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ENG, ES | **Interpretation available in :** ENG>ES, ES>ENG

Our panelists will discuss the ways that Puerto Rican co-op educators and incarcerated and previously incarcerated Puerto Rican's address the education challenges in developing co-ops. Jessica will also review case studies from other countries and compare them with the Puerto Rican examples, examining not just the various approaches to co-op education but also enabling policies for developing co-ops in prisons; successes of the co-ops; and levels of self determination in the co-ops. They will explore best practices for co-op success (and what we mean by success).

## Building a Resilient Worker Cooperative Ecosystem in Madison, Wisconsin

Tuesday, August 8 - 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Hotel Verdanza

**Speakers :** ENG

Madison's worker cooperative ecosystem has grown since the 1970s, with cooperatives forming a supportive network called Madison Workers Cooperative (MadWorC). They advocated for City funding, leading to the creation of Madison Cooperative Development Coalition (MCDC). MCDC provides technical assistance, funding, and builds partnerships with community-based organizations like WJW, a workers' rights center, and MadWorC, a peer network. This presentation highlights MCDC's efforts in offering education, assistance, training, and financial support to existing and emerging cooperatives. Their goal is to develop an ecosystem that fosters democratic workplaces, improved conditions, and living wages.



## Co-op Climate Action Plan Workshop

Thursday, August 10 - 8:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. EDP University

**Speakers :** ENG, ES | **Interpretation available in :** ENG>ES, ES>ENG

Create a climate action plan for your cooperative in this participatory workshop. Understand approaches your cooperative can take towards incorporating climate justice, mitigation, and adaptation into your cooperative's everyday practice in practical, meaningful and thoughtful ways. Create a draft climate action plan to bring back for further engagement by your cooperative, along with concrete next steps for how to finalize it with your fellow members after the conference. Develop not only a better understanding of climate justice, but also how your specific cooperative community can collectively create a more resilient, sustainable, and just world.



## How Cooperative Developers Support Resilient Communities

Thursday, August 10 - 8:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Hotel Verdanza

**Speakers :** ENG

During the pandemic, cooperative developers emerged as pillars of support for their communities. Within the CooperationWorks network, developers provided pro bono assistance securing federal emergency funds like the EIDL and PPP, volunteered for office hours to provide crisis business planning and budgeting to co-ops in need, and quickly adapted their services to ensure they could continue to provide needed technical assistance, job training, and education to new and existing cooperatives. Across the country cooperative developers found innovative ways to continue providing services crucial to supporting existing and startup enterprises, resulting in more reliable community resources, jobs saved, and cooperative enterprises able to weather social and economic downturns. Indeed, many cooperative development centers saw the demand for their services increase dramatically over the last three years. Even in relatively stable times, co-op developers provide vital support systems that help their communities meet their needs. This panel will explore the role of cooperative developers in stabilizing and supporting resources to build resilient communities through the lens of cooperative developers working in different geographies and sectors across the United States.

## Virtual Co-op Education: What options are there and how can we cooperate for greater impact on people, coops and climate?

Thursday, August 10 - 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Hotel Verdanza

**Speakers :** ENG

Virtual cooperative education has witnessed significant growth in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. While academic programs like USM exist, non-academic options are underutilized. NCBA CLUSA International entered the virtual education realm in Peru with webinars and later launched the School of Coop Marketing, now known as Coop Business School (CBS). CBS has expanded to Guatemala and is expanding to the U.S., offering culturally sensitive courses to reach youth, women, and rural areas. CBS has provided over 30 courses, 75 group tutorships, 4,000 individual tutorships, and 209 webinars, benefiting students from Peru and neighboring countries. Over 5,200 students attended classes in 2022, resulting in the development of 86 coop brands, 342 new product designs, and the creation of online profiles and platforms. CBS serves as a co-learning platform, fostering interactions and community support. NCBA CLUSA aims to share its CBS experience, learn from other online co-op education programs, and collaborate with cooperative educators interested in the e-learning platform. Climate change awareness and sustainable business practices are areas of focus. The objective is to expand access to quality cooperative education that positively impacts individuals, cooperative organizations, and the planet.

## Is the Cooperative Identity Facilitating Sustainability Strategies and Results: the Case of Funeral Cooperatives in Quebec

Thursday, August 10 - 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Hotel Verdanza

**Speakers :** ENG

The Federation of Funeral Cooperatives in Quebec has been working for several years to develop a framework for thinking, implementing, evaluating, and improving their practices and results in terms of sustainability. Through this case study, is it possible to assess whether the cooperative identity acts as a facilitator or as a barrier in terms of sustainability and if a sustainable development approach in a cooperative is different from a traditional organization and, if so, in what way.





# Co-op tours

## TOUR 1

Following a long tradition of learning about the areas we visit, participants of the Institute will be visiting co-operatives from the San Juan area to learn about the innovation and solutions of Puerto Rican cooperators.

There will be three tours this year on Wednesday, August 9th. Tour One will focus on coffee production and ecotourism in the Morovis and Ciales rural area. Tour Two will look at various co-operatives in the Caguas - Aibonito area which are rural areas and how these cooperatives contribute to the community development and resilience. Tour 3 will bring you an overview of the San Juan area co-ops between long-established cooperatives and youth co-ops, and the cooperative institutions supporting their development.

We have the opportunity to be accompanied on each of these tours by La Liga de Cooperativas. Many thanks for their support and dedication.

La Liga de Cooperativas de Puerto Rico is the integrating organism of the Puerto Rican Cooperative Movement. Their main functions are the representation of cooperatives before the State, promotion of cooperativism, defense of cooperative principles, fostering integration and the development of cooperative education.

### 1- CABACOOOP - Las Cabachuelas

The Cabachuelas Work Cooperative comprises eleven individuals with diverse backgrounds, including certified environmental interpreters, a community social worker, educators, geographers, agroecological promoters, and an accountant. The cooperative was established to support the Cabachuelas Project.

The Cabachuelas Project is a community-based education and ecotourism project created for the Las Cabachuelas Nature Reserve in Morovis. This initiative has allowed the creation of recreational, educational and research programs. The work carried out is oriented towards community development with a participatory co-management plan for the Nature Reserve and the development of local economic activity.

This Project represents an opportunity to promote the economic activation and protection of Las Cabachuelas from a community base that creates and sustains jobs, recreational activities and educational programs in an ecotourism community where people develop alliances to achieve social and environmental justice. Morovis has a complete diversity of natural and cultural riches that provide significant life experiences for residents and visitors.





# Co-op tours

## TOUR 1

### 2- Cafe Cibales Cooperativa de Agro Turismo PR in Ciales

Café Ciales Cooperativa de Agro Turismo PR, located in Ciales, is one of the oldest cooperatives in Puerto Rico. Initially known as PR Tobacco Marketing, it was formed by a group of tobacco workers aiming to obtain better prices for their products. Over the years, they acquired buildings in various locations to serve as warehouses and distribution centers for tobacco.

In 1946, the cooperative changed its name to Coop. Agro-Comercial de PR «La Marqueting.» Although tobacco production declined, the cooperative decided to contribute to the agricultural sector by purchasing the coffee processing and roasting facilities from Mr. Andrés Jiménez in Ciales. They started buying coffee beans from their farmer members and producing Café Ciales and its various varieties.

The storage buildings were repurposed as rental spaces, while some were expropriated. Currently, the cooperative offers rental spaces in San Juan, Orocovis, Naranjito, and Ciales.

With a long and rich history, it is impossible to summarize all the details, but the cooperative honors the intelligence and tenacity of those who started this project.

*Cibales*<sup>café</sup>

# Co-op tours

## TOUR 2

### 1- Fabideas

Fabideas Coop is a worker's cooperative in Aibonito, Puerto Rico, founded in 2019. They specialize in manufacturing and distributing Montessori educational wood products and children's furniture. The cooperative was inspired by parents from a school community who sought to create Montessori materials and ensure a sustainable future for their community. Sharing the values of Montessori philosophy and the cooperative economic movement, they focus on economic sustainability, empowering artisans, and promoting responsible harvesting of natural resources. Their innovative approach includes sharing product design knowledge, establishing a blockchain-based microgrid for energy democratization, and involving children from the Montessori school in the project's various aspects.

**FabIDEAS**  
COOP  
A I B O N I T O



# Co-op tours

## TOUR 2

# Co-op tours

## TOUR 2

### 2- Cooperativa de Energia de San Salvador (Pirucho Coop)

A groundbreaking users' cooperative in the renewable energy sector, Pirucho Coop is providing innovative clean and sustainable energy services to the San Salvador neighborhood in Caguas, Puerto Rico. With a strong commitment to fostering positive social and environmental impact, PiruchoCoop has emerged as a driving force in the community's pursuit of greener energy solutions. Their inception was inspired by the challenges faced during the aftermath of Hurricane María in 2017, where the cooperative's vision of a solar-powered community took shape. Benefiting from the essential financial support and guidance offered by the Puerto Rico Community Foundation (FCPR), PiruchoCoop has successfully transformed their aspirations into tangible reality. Today, they stand at the forefront of empowering communities with cleaner and more sustainable energy sources. <https://www.facebook.com/PiruchoCoop/>





# Co-op tours

## TOUR 3

### 1- Cooperativa de Vivienda Alejandro Tapia y Rivera

The Cooperativa de Vivienda Alejandro Tapia y Rivera is a unique housing cooperative located in Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico. With its rich history dating back to 1816, the building reflects stunning Spanish-influenced architectural details and has been designated as a historical monument. The cooperative offers thirty subsidized apartments, including various layouts from studios to three-bedroom units, all equipped with essential amenities like kitchen appliances. Committed to equal housing opportunities, the cooperative aims to offer affordable and comfortable living spaces, creating a welcoming and enriching environment for its residents.

# Co-op tours

## TOUR 3

### 2- Liga de Cooperativas

The Puerto Rico Cooperative League is a private institution created by the cooperatives themselves in 1948. It is the only third degree association, which makes it the highest level of integration of the Puerto Rican Cooperative Movement. The League groups federations, second degree integration organizations, councils, sectorial commissions, central and individual cooperatives. This organism is the integrator of the Puerto Rican Cooperative Movement, having as main functions the representation of the cooperatives before the State, Promotion of Cooperativism, defense of the cooperative principles, fostering the integration and development of cooperative education.





# Co-op tours

## TOUR 3

### 3- Instituto de Cooperativismo ([www.uprrp.edu/tag/instituto-de-cooperativismo](http://www.uprrp.edu/tag/instituto-de-cooperativismo))

The Institute of Cooperativism of the University of Puerto Rico is a permanent cooperative education center created by Joint Resolution Number 95 of the Legislature of Puerto Rico in 1953, attached to the School of Social Sciences. Its mission is to provide cooperative education and services to promote a just and equitable socioeconomic development in the country. It aims to develop the creation of cooperatives or community-based organizations that practice the values of the cooperative philosophy and the economy of solidarity.



# Co-op tours

## TOUR 3

### 4- Cultura Bicicleta

Cultura Bicicleta is a co-op formed by a group of students and bicycle advocates from UPR who observed the under-utilization of the surrounding campus area for creating a bike-friendly facility. Recognizing the congestion of vehicles in Río Piedras during peak times, they saw an opportunity for students within biking distance to reduce unnecessary carbon footprint and ease traffic congestion. After Hurricane Maria, when transportation was challenging due to damaged roads and long lines at gas stations, people turned to bikes as a solution for emergencies. Capitalizing on this opportunity, they aimed to provide education and establish a small business that could positively impact the community.





# ACE Banquet

Wednesday, August 9th, 2023

**Hotel Verdanza, San Juan**

**7:30 p.m.** Banquet Opening

**7:35 p.m.** Welcome and Greetings by Steve Dubb

**7:40 p.m.** Address from the Puerto Rican Co-operative Ecosystem

**7:50 p.m.** Address from Julien Geremie (Cooperation Council of Ontario) Official sponsor of the Banquet

**8:00 p.m.** Dinner is served



Baby Spinach, Dried Cranberries, Raisins, Goat Cheese, Candied Walnuts, Shallots Vinaigrette

Baby Greens Mix with Pickled Grape Tomatoes, Diced European Cucumbers, Shaved Radish, Orange Champagne Vinaigrette

**Presentation of the John Logue Award**



Herb-Marinated Grilled Mahi, Seasonal Vegetables, Roasted Garlic Supreme Sauce served with Cranberry Rice Pilaf

Grilled Boneless Pork Loin, Asparagus, Oven Roasted Tomatoes and Tamarind Sauce served with Potato Dauphinoise

Linguini Pasta, Sautéed Eggplant, Zucchini, Asparagus, Portobello Mushroom and Sundried Tomatoes in light tomato sauce

**Presentation of The William Hlushko Award**



Chocolate Gianduja Mousse with Strawberry Preserve and Crème Chantilly

Coconut Panna Cotta with Pineapple Compote and Coconut Florentine

**Presentation of the Jessica Gordon Nembhard Cooperative Education and Training Award**



**9:45 p.m.** Announcing of the Silent Auction Winners & Closing Remarks

**11:10 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.** Live Music & Dancing with Bomba Evolución “Rebelión”

**Thank you for joining the ACE Banquet!**



# ACE Awards

During the banquet, an important highlight of the evening will be the presentation of three prestigious ACE Awards. These awards serve as a recognition of outstanding achievements and contributions within the ACE community.

The ACE Awards aim to honor individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication, leadership, and excellence in their respective fields. These recipients are individuals who have made a significant impact, inspired others, and exemplified the core values of the ACE organization.

As the event unfolds, a special moment will be dedicated to announcing and presenting the ACE Awards. The recipients will be called up to the stage, where they will receive their award amid applause and appreciation from the audience. They might have an opportunity to deliver a short acceptance speech, expressing gratitude and sharing their insights or words of inspiration.

The ACE Awards ceremony serves as a moment of celebration and encouragement within the ACE community. It recognizes the exceptional individuals who have made a significant impact and motivates others to strive for excellence in their own endeavors.



# ACE Silent Auction

A silent auction is an auction where participants place their bids on items without an auctioneer. Instead of openly competing with others, participants write down their bids on a sheet or use a bidding app. It's called «silent» because there's no vocal bidding. At the end of the auction, the highest bidder for each item wins. Silent auctions are often used for fundraising events and offer a relaxed atmosphere for bidding on unique items while supporting a cause.

During the ACE Banquet, there will be a special silent auction taking place that has a specific purpose: to finance next year's scholarships for the 2024 Institute. The funds generated from this silent auction will be used to provide scholarships for the upcoming year's 2024 Institute. These scholarships will enable deserving individuals to pursue their educational goals and receive support for their studies.

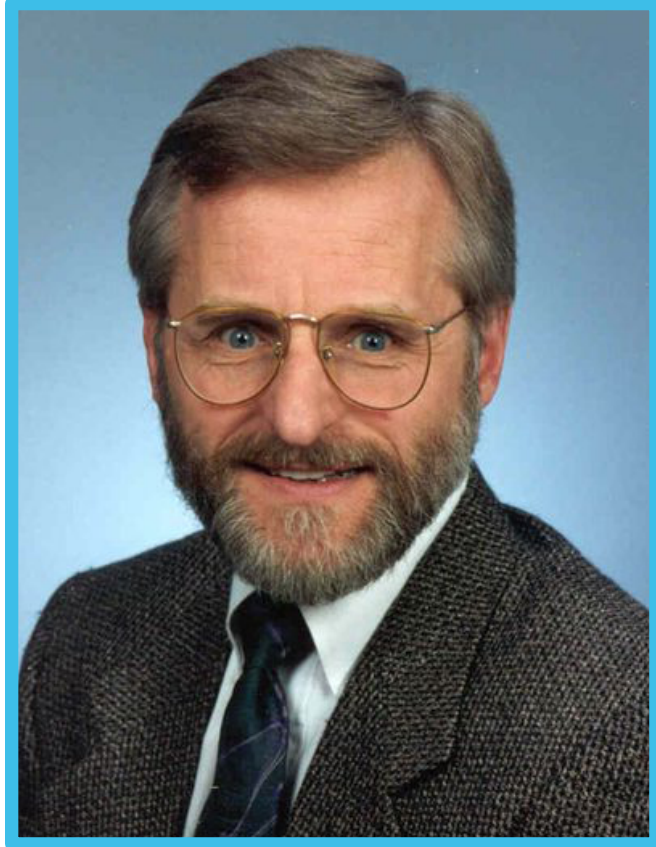
By participating in the silent auction, attendees have an opportunity to contribute towards this noble cause. They can bid on various items, experiences, or services, knowing that the funds raised will directly impact the lives of students who will benefit from the scholarships.

So, by actively engaging in this particular silent auction during the ACE Banquet, attendees are not only enjoying the bidding experience but also making a positive difference in the lives of future scholars, helping them pursue their educational dreams at the 2024 Institute.



# Louie Doering Tribute

On the passing of  
**Louis G. Doering** on March 13, 2023



In the cooperative community, we have principles. One of them is the commitment to education about the cooperative business model.

When thinking and talking about cooperative education, a few questions that always surface include:

How did you first learn about cooperative education?

How did you keep growing as a cooperative educator, and how can we encourage and support others? What can you do as a leader in cooperative education? What can we do to support you?

On March 23, 2023, Louis G. Doering, age 78, passed away suddenly after a walk with his wife, Jill Padley. Louie Doering was an exceptional cooperative leader. He served in many other cooperative roles and was recognized in many ways: with NCBA CLUSA International, and the International Cooperative Alliance, as chair of the dotCoop board, and through Cooperative

Network (the Minnesota-Wisconsin Co-op Trade Association), which recognized him in 2000 with the Cooperative Builder Award.

Louie was also deeply committed to the Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE). He served on the board of directors, as president, and on many committees: Institute planning, nominations, and others. In 2005, ACE bestowed upon him the Reginald J. Cressman Award, which recognizes an ACE Member who demonstrates outstanding commitment to staff development.

It was through this deep involvement in ACE that, for many of us, Louie Doering played a critical role, and was an important actor in a much larger story.

Brett Fairbairn writes in *Prairie Connections and Reflections: The History, Present, and Future of Co-operative Education*<sup>1</sup>:

It was in 1952 that the Cooperative League of the USA invited Canadian participants to a conference at the University of Minnesota in Duluth. This was the first step toward the formation of ACE. Then after meetings in Illinois, Minnesota, and Iowa, the Institute was held for the first

time outside the United States in 1956, at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

Following ACE's first foray into Saskatoon, institutes and schools were held in varying locations in the Midwestern US, and once in Winnipeg, Manitoba, during the years that followed. The next new departure came at the 1964 meeting in Kansas City, Missouri. The participants in Kansas City made a key decision: they would institutionalize co-operative education in a permanent association, and they decided that the founding meeting of this new association would be held in 1965 in Saskatoon. The key figure behind the decision appears to have been Jerry Voorhis, the long-time head of the Cooperative League of the USA, who was at that time nearing the end of his twenty-year term as executive director.

Fairbairn then includes a speech by Jerry Voorhis that provides a clear and inspirational explanation of the value and importance of cooperative education.

ACE was formally founded in Saskatoon in 1965. With members from the Caribbean, Canada, and the USA, ACE was managed by Canadian organizations from its inception until 1994, when it was moved from Ottawa to St. Paul, under the auspices of The Cooperative Foundation.

A very successful ACE Institute was held in St. Paul in 1994, most notable for a large number of local participants. One of those was Louie Doering.

The 1994 ACE Institute was the start of something special: it was so successful that the local cooperative community advocated for the continuation of the institute here, resulting in the formation of New Visions/New Ventures. Louie Doering, William Nelson, and Gail Graham played important roles in its formation. As William recalls, several of the participants who attended the Institute for the first time said "we should keep doing this throughout the year."

With support and involvement of leaders from Central Purchasing Co-op Services, Twin City Co-ops Federal Credit Union (now known as SPIRE Credit Union), The Cooperative Foundation, CHS Foundation, Seward Food Co-op, Mississippi Market Food Co-op along with many others, New Visions/New Ventures (a later iteration of which is known now as CoMinnesota) grew into a wonderful regular gathering for networking, collaboration and exchange of ideas.

Today, cooperators in Minnesota and beyond are beneficiaries of Louie's commitment to growing both co-ops and people. When we engage across co-op sectors (including with credit unions), when we consider the whole person in any circumstance, when we reach out to welcome and support the young and emerging cooperators among us, when we strive to unite body, mind, and spirit—and lead with a servant's heart—we follow the path that Louie laid for us.

And the end of that path?

There is no end; only a new conversation to begin.

*In the cooperative spirit: Scott Jax, William Nelson, and Cathy Statz*

<sup>1</sup> "Prairie Connections and Reflections: The History, Present, and Future of Co-operative Education." Brett Fairbairn. Co-published in conjunction with The Association of Cooperative Educators. October 1999. Centre for the Study of Co-operatives. The University of Saskatchewan. Page 12



# Important & Useful Information

## Weather and advice in Puerto Rico

Be aware that August is the wet season on the island of Puerto Rico.

Pack and use insect repellent to protect yourself efficiently against mosquito bites, especially during the sunset and the sunrise hours, as mosquitoes are more active during these periods.

Opt for light-coloured, loose clothes made of tightly woven materials such as nylon or polyester when you're out and about for a long time.

Some co-operatives we will visit during the co-op tour are in mountainous areas. Be sure to bring closed-toe shoes suitable for trekking in muddy conditions and have a rain jacket or other protective gear.

Water is drinkable everywhere.

## Institute Venues

The conference will be held **at EDP University - Recinto de Hato Rey on Tuesday only**.  
The address is 560 Ave. Ponce de León PR 00918

**For transportation & parking**, a complimentary bus will leave at 8:45 a.m from Hotel Verdanza to EDP University - Recinto de Hato Rey . At the end of the day, the bus will leave at 5:45 p.m from EDP University - Recinto de Hato Rey to Hotel Verdanza.

If you do not want to use the complimentary bus , we recommend to use the Light Rail (Tren Urbano). The closest station from EDP University - Recinto de Hato Rey is Domenech.

If you decide to come by car, there is no available parking space at EDP University unless you're a company working for the Institute that day. You'll have to park in the street and or private parkings.

The conference will be held **at Verdanza Hotel on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday**.  
The address is 8020 José M. Tartak Ave, Isla Verde, PR 00979

**For transportation & parking**, we recommend our attendees to use Uber, a taxi or their own car to arrive at Hotel Verdanza.

There is self -parking and valet parking at the Hotel. There is a special rate for guest of \$10 self -parking and \$12 for Valet.

## Getting to the Hotel Verdanza

The island's main airport is Aeropuerto Internacional Luis Munoz Marin (SJU), 20 min east of Old San Juan in the neighborhood of Isla Verde and 1 mile away from Hotel Verdanza. The address is 8020 Tartak Ave, isla Verde, PR 00979.

Even though the Hotel is only 1 mile away from the airport, they don't recommend to walk from there. There are many transportation options like taxis (search for taxis turísticos, they are white and have a "Taxi Turístico" label on the door), UBER, or you can make arrangements with the Hotel (subject to fee) prior to your arrival.

## Meals schedule

Breakfast will be served between 7:00 and 8:30 a.m at Hotel Verdanza in the Grand Opera Foyer.

Tuesday and Thursday, you'll have a coffee break around 10 a.m.

Lunch will be served at 12 p.m or 12:30 p.m depending on the day.

Dinner will be served at 7 p.m.



# Important & Useful Information

## Bus schedule for Tuesday (EDP University) and Wednesday (Co-op Tours)

A complimentary bus will take attendees from Hotel Verdanza to EDP University - Recinto de Hato Rey campus on Tuesday, August 8th. The exact location will be given at the Institute check-in.

**From Hotel Verdanza to EDP University**

Departure at 08:45 a.m.

**From EDP University to Hotel Verdanza**

Departure at 5:45 p.m.

**Please be in the lobby at least 15 minutes before departure time.**

You will register for the co-op tour of your choice on a first-come first-serve basis at the Institute Check-in.

There will be three mini bus.

**Buses will leave at 10:30 a.m. Please go to the lobby from 10 a.m. to be directed to the right bus.**

**Don't be late!**

## Need interpretation? Here's how it works

1. Check in **Sessions insight** which language(s) the panel you wish to attend is available in.
2. Also check the language in which the panel will be interpreted.
3. Go to the table marked: Interpretation.
4. Prepare a piece of ID in exchange of the headset you will receive.
5. You're all set!

Each headset will have channels that can be switched to correspond with the room/ language, so **you can keep the same headset throughout the day** and switch to the appropriate channel.

Headsets that are not returned will be billed at \$185 per headset.

If you have questions about interpretation and headset logistics, please see with our ACE Team.

## You plan to extend your stay in Puerto Rico?

Good call! For ideas of what to do, where to go, visit [www.discoverpuertorico.com](http://www.discoverpuertorico.com)

## For any inquiries, comments or special needs

Please contact our **ACE Team** (blue T-shirts with our logo on it) or **Joséphine** at [info@ace.coop](mailto:info@ace.coop) or +1 416 364 4545 x 102.



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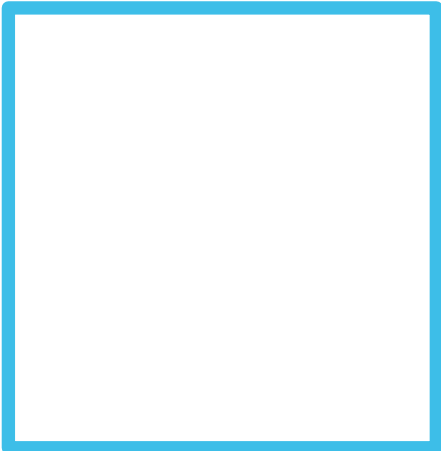
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### Cooperation Council of Ontario

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A leading economic, social and community development organization in Ontario, the Cooperation Council of Ontario propels impactful ideas, approaches and projects.

We stimulate community development, connect talent, produce applied research, and support the emergence and growth of mission-based organizations, primarily co-operatives and social enterprises. But above all, we are an impact-driven organization, working every day to create a better Ontario.

More information: [cco.coop](http://cco.coop)

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### The National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA)

NCBA CLUSA is the primary voice in the United States for people who use cooperatives to build a better world. Since 1916, they aim to develop, advance and protect cooperative enterprise. NCBA CLUSA works to build a better world and a more inclusive economy that empowers people to contribute to shared prosperity and well-being for themselves and future generations. By leveraging the shared resources of the cooperative movement, they seek to engage, partner with and empower people from all walks of life—particularly those left behind by a shifting economy and facing the greatest economic and societal barriers. They achieve this vision through collaborative partnerships in development, advocacy, public awareness and thought leadership.

More information: [ncbaclusa.coop](http://ncbaclusa.coop)



### Cooperative Development Foundation

The Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF) promotes self-help and mutual aid in community, economic, and social development through cooperative enterprise. CDF is a thought leader in the use of cooperatives to create resilient communities, including the housing and care needs of seniors and people living with disabilities. Through its funds, fiscal sponsorships, and fundraising, CDF makes grants and loans that foster cooperative development domestically and abroad. CDF provides recovery grants to cooperatives impacted by disaster, scholarships to train local cooperative leaders, and funding for research and education to advance the understanding of cooperatives.

More information: [cdf.coop](http://cdf.coop)





## Shared Capital Cooperative

Shared Capital Cooperative is a national loan fund and federally certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that provides financing to cooperative businesses and housing throughout the United States. Shared Capital's mission is to build a just, equitable and democratic economy by investing in cooperative enterprise with a focus on providing financing to co-ops to create wealth in low-income and economically disadvantaged communities.

**More information:** [sharedcapital.coop](https://sharedcapital.coop)



## Ralph K. Morris Foundation

The Ralph K. Morris Foundation is a nonprofit corporation which provides development opportunities for emerging leaders expressing interest in applying and advancing the principles of cooperation, and in promoting farmland preservation, land stewardship and sustainability.

**More information:** [ralphkморrisfoundation.org](https://ralphkморrisfoundation.org)



## Banco Cooperativo

For more than 45 years, Banco Cooperativo has been the central financial institution of the Cooperative Movement, maintaining a great stability in the system, thanks to the backing and support of the Affiliated Cooperatives and the Cooperative Members who have not hesitated to place their trust in us.

Our commitment is unavoidable, based on the principles and values that govern the Cooperative Movement. Thousands of Puerto Ricans trust in the work carried out by our institutions, which, together with Banco Cooperativo, are building a better tomorrow.

**More information:** [bancoop.com](https://bancoop.com)



## Seed Commons

Seed Commons is a national network of locally rooted, non-extractive loan funds that brings the power of big finance under community control. By taking guidance from the grassroots and sharing capital and resources to support local cooperative businesses, we are building the infrastructure necessary for a truly just, democratic and sustainable new economy.

**More information:** [seedcommons.org](https://seedcommons.org)



## Cooperation Works!

CooperationWorks! — or CW for short — is the Center of Excellence for cooperative business development. We are a dynamic and innovative national cooperative created to grow the cooperative model across the United States. We envision a society in which thriving, cooperatively-owned enterprises are the bridge to a just, resilient democracy. Our mission is to strengthen America's cooperative movement by building and empowering a network of skilled cooperative development practitioners.

**More information:** [cooperationworks.coop](https://cooperationworks.coop)





## Co-operatives First

Rural and Indigenous communities are full of motivated, innovative people who want to live enriching lives in their home community. Of course, some of these communities face challenges – like a lack of businesses and services, government cuts, and people moving away. But these people don't need the government or a big company to swoop in and improve local conditions or find solutions. With the right tools and a little guidance, they can do that themselves.

That's why we're here. Everyone on the Co-operatives First's team grew up in a rural or Indigenous community. We do this work because we care about these communities, and we know co-ops can help them grow and thrive. And because we have ongoing support from the Co-operative Retailing System and Federated Co-operatives Limited, we offer this support at no cost to you

More information: [cooperativesfirst.com](https://cooperativesfirst.com)



## Minnesota Farmers Union

Minnesota Farmers Union works to protect and enhance the economic interests and quality of life of family farmers and ranchers and rural communities. MFU is a nonprofit membership-based organization. Membership is open to everyone.

More information: [mfu.org](https://mfu.org)



## Local Enterprise Assistance Fund

LEAF's mission is to promote human and economic development by providing financing and development assistance to cooperatives and social purpose ventures that create and retain jobs for low-income people. LEAF lends across the US, with a focus on cooperatives such as community-owned natural food cooperatives that create high quality jobs and provide access to healthy food in urban and rural communities; low-income cooperative housing developments; and worker-owned organizations and other community-based businesses and social enterprises. Since its founding over 40 years ago, LEAF has invested and leveraged over \$122 million, resulting in the creation or retention of more than 10,300 jobs.

More information: [leaffund.org](https://leaffund.org)



## Cabo Rojo Coop

Cabo Rojo Coop is a financial institution founded in 1956 in Cabo Rojo. Our mission is to provide competitive financial services in order to satisfy the current and future needs of our members and depositors, to contribute to improve their quality of life. We have branches in Cabo Rojo, Mayagüez, Hormigueros and Sabana Grande.

More information: [caborjocoop.com](https://caborjocoop.com)





## Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Moroveña

The Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Moroveña is a financial institution that originated in Morovis, Puerto Rico. It was founded in 1953 by a group of individuals who met at the Catholic Church in Morovis. In 1981, the Cooperative received recognition from the Federation of Cooperatives of Puerto Rico for being the fastest-growing cooperative in the northern area. Currently, the Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Moroveña operates two branches, one in the Pugnado Adentro neighborhood in Vega Baja and another on Roosevelt Avenue in San Juan. The cooperative expresses its commitment to continue setting new goals to provide quality service to its members and depositors.

More information: [coopmorovena.com](http://coopmorovena.com)



## CHS Foundation

Funded by charitable gifts from CHS since 1947, the CHS Foundation is dedicated to developing a new generation of ag leaders for lifelong success. Through cooperative education, university partnerships and ag leadership programs, the CHS Foundation is helping build a strong agriculture talent pipeline for the future.

More information: [www.chsfoundation.org/](http://www.chsfoundation.org/)

We want to thank the CHS Foundation for their long-standing support of ACE throughout the years.



## Acknowledgments

A very special thank you to **all the members of the 2023 Institute Planning Committee:** Steve Dubb, Charity Schmidt, Gary Hampton, Jaime Cuevas, Cathy Statz, Hélène Turcotte, Kath LaTour, Teia Evans (NCBA CLUSA), Bernardo Penaherrera (NCBA CLUSA), Esther Julia West (Shared Capital).

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Special thanks to Glorimar Santini for opening the doors and welcoming us so warmly at the **EDP University - Recinto de Hato Rey**.

A special thank you to **our interpreters from the workers' co-operative Traducoop** for assisting us throughout the Institute and enable participants to enjoy exciting discussions beyond the language barrier.

A very warm thank you to **all the co-operatives in Puerto Rico, not only in San Juan but also in Caguas, Morovis, Ciales, and Aibonito**, which welcomed us so warmly and shared with us their co-operative's history and showed us with passion the work carried out within their cooperatives to have a positive impact on the community and their environment.

Also, **congratulations and thanks to the honorees of our ACE Awards Banquet** for their part in developing cooperatives and demonstrating how cooperative education can be different. Thanks to **Old-Town Glassworks workers' co-operative**, which creates these beautiful glassware awards from recycled bottles in Yukon, Canada.

Thank you to **our ACE sponsors whose financial assistance provides scholarships, language interpretation and other services that are vital to our Institute**.

We would especially like to acknowledge the support and thank the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International** for the twenty scholarships they provided to US co-op developers from or working in historically underserved communities. We would also like to thank **Les Offices Jeunesse Internationaux du Québec (LOJIQ)** for the scholarships they granted to Quebec residents. We also want to recognize and thank the **Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF)** and the Ralph K. Morris Foundation for their funds to financially support our speakers and attendees.

Last but not least, the Association of Cooperative Educators would like to extend its thanks to those who, every year, by attending this unique conference focusing on cooperative education in North America make the Institute an exceptional place for **all co-op educators and developers from the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean** to share their work, challenges, successes, best practices beyond frontiers and grow from it. **THANK YOU!**



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Slide presentations from the ACE Institute will be sent after the Institute.





**Thank you for attending  
the #ACEInstitute2023!  
We hope you enjoyed  
your experience and we  
hope to see you again  
next year!**

