
Centre for the Study of Co-operatives
University of Saskatchewan

STATEMENT OF MISSION AND VISION

The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives is an interdisciplinary centre of higher learning that provides people with conceptual and informational tools to understand co-operatives and to develop them as solutions to economic and social needs.

The Centre's work has two main aspects: the creation of knowledge, and its dissemination. These tasks are not separable, since interaction with students, co-operative members, and the public raises questions and problems that spur new research, and unlocks local knowledge that deepens our understanding of co-operatives.

Creation of Knowledge and Involvement with Learners

The Centre works to create new, original knowledge about co-operatives.

Theoretical and Conceptual Research

The Centre generates new knowledge about co-operatives. This research will be relevant to problems and issues the co-op sector faces. It will also ask fundamental questions. Theoretical and conceptual research is important because urgent problems arise when traditional ways of thinking no longer work.

Postgraduate Research and Education

An important part of the Centre's role will be the training of graduate students, who conduct research in their own right, with guidance from Centre staff, and go on to careers in co-operatives, government, or educational institutions where this knowledge is useful.

Applied Research

The Centre will undertake and aggressively pursue specific research for the co-operative sector and for community groups interested in co-ops. Since the Centre cannot serve all needs, it must be selective in the projects it chooses, and favour those that significantly contribute to the creation of new knowledge and are complementary to the Centre's conceptual research.

Resource Centre

The Centre developed a comprehensive research library and resource centre supporting analysis, study, and reflection concerning co-operatives. It is now housed in Special Collections in the university's main library.

The Centre works to disseminate knowledge about co-operatives to those who can use it.

Undergraduate and Extension Education

The Centre will be a leader in co-operative education, both through classes for credit at the University of Saskatchewan and through education beyond the campus boundaries.

Information and Communications

The Centre will develop communications strategies to ensure that its expertise and research results are fully utilized and understood.

- The Centre will become a leader in the delivery and independent publication of co-operative materials using the full range of delivery methods (both print and electronic).
- The Centre will become a leader in applications of computer and Internet technology to co-operative education and communications.

Working Co-operatively

The Centre will develop close links with its sponsors and other co-operatives, with provincial and federal agencies, and with other academics and institutions involved in co-operative research and education. The Centre will co-ordinate with other institutes to achieve synergies and reduce duplication. We will pursue an especially close relationship with our host institution, the University of Saskatchewan.

The centre and its stakeholders envision a future in which people are empowered through co-operatives—among other solutions—to develop an economy and society that are democratic, participatory, responsive, creative, diverse, productive, and sustainable. In pursuing this vision we are guided by the co-operative values of voluntarism, mutualism, egalitarianism and equity, solidarity, practicality, and transparency.

When people in Saskatchewan or Canada or other parts of the world have a question about co-operatives, the centre will be one of the first places they think of to find the answer.