

\`ant-,hil\ n. A bustling centre of activity, where the interests of the group come before those of the individual.

Anthill

Newsletter of the British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies
A Research Institute located within the University of Victoria

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University
of Victoria

BCICS' Ethical Purchasing Forum Connects Community for Discussion and Education

Sol Kinnis

February 23-24, 2007, the BCICS was pleased to host what we hope will be the first of an annual forum on Ethical Purchasing. Over 125 people were engaged in the two days of discussions on increasing ethical trade on southern Vancouver Island. Forum participants explored the complexities of ethical trade through presentations from experts, discussion panels, and action planning breakout groups. Keynote speakers included Francisco VanderHoff Boersma, one of the founders of the first Fair Trade label, and Jacqui MacDonald, distinguished international fair and ethical trade consultant. The forum concluded on Saturday night with a delicious banquet provided by the International Women's Catering Co-op.

Many thanks go out to our wonderful sponsors – Mountain Equipment Co-op, Peninsula Co-op, Level Ground Trading Ltd, UVic Graduate Students' Society, and within the University of Victoria the Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, and Studies in Policy and Practice. Thank you very much!

The forum was organized by the BCICS in collaboration with the Canadian Student Fair Trade Network, the Values Based Business Network, the UVic Sustainability Project, the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group and the Canadian Social Economy Hub. (See p. 8 and 9 for more forum news.)

MEC Ethical Sourcing Director Shares Experiences

Sol Kinnis

Mountain Equipment Co-op's Director of Ethical Sourcing, Harvey Chan, led an informative session during the Ethical Purchasing Forum on the challenges to workers within the manufacturing sector, and the options and obstacles for retailers in monitoring the supply chain. "Ethical sourcing is about striving for social justice in factories throughout the world," writes Chan.



While 43% of MEC-brand products are sourced from Canadian factories, the Canadian manufacturing

Continued on p. 10

CSEHub/CIRIEC Conference Update!

The Canadian Social Economy Hub (CSEHub) is hosting the 1st International CIRIEC World Research Conference on the Social Economy, October 22 – 25, 2007. Researchers, senior practitioners and government officials (both elected and civil servants) will meet in Victoria, BC, Canada to review the latest research on the Social Economy and discuss its implications for public policy and the development of Social Economy

organizations. The enthusiastic response for the call for papers prompted CSEHub organizers to extend the conference to four days! Register online for the conference at <http://conference.se-es.ca/register> (See p. 7 for conference details.)



Participants at the Ethical Purchasing Forum

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The BCICS is a catalyst for research, learning and teaching about co-operative practice and thought. The Institute was founded in January 2000 under the directorship of Dr. Ian MacPherson, and is based at the University of Victoria. The BCICS collaborates with other post-secondary institutions, the co-operative sector, governments and people and communities throughout British Columbia and beyond.

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**A Passion for Possibilities:
 Communities and Co-operatives in British Columbia**

Joy Emmanuel

For over a century co-operatives and credit unions have been an intricate part of the fabric of many communities throughout British Columbia. Their impact on the social and economic landscape of the province, however, has only been superficially explored. Yet, co-ops are flourishing around the province and they are continually being adapted to a wide array of circumstances as local residents respond to changing societal conditions and as they seek to maintain a measure of control over their destiny.

A Passion for Possibilities is a collaborative effort of many BCICS researchers and co-operators throughout the province. Our original research began in 2001 and carried forward into last year when we were able to bring this volume to fruition. A Passion for Possibilities offers insights into the relationships, both historical and contemporary, between co-operatives and the communities in which they are located. Within an historical context of social and economic developments, we have traced when co-operatives and credit unions began to form in a given area and how they impacted the local and regional economy. In the process, we have identified some of the challenges they faced and the factors contributing to their growth and success.

The book highlights case studies in eight communities of British Columbia: the Dawson Creek area in the northwest corner of the province, Vanderhoof and surrounding area in central B.C., Prince Rupert in the northwest, Nelson and area in the Kootenays, the southern region of the Okanagan, the Commercial Drive area of Vancouver, Malcolm Island off the northern tip of Vancouver Island, and the Cowichan Valley, also on Vancouver Island.

A Passion for Possibilities arises from a desire to tell more of the story of this “quiet giant” nestled into the province’s history and actively engaged in the contemporary life of British Columbians.

Expected date of publication: May 1, 2007.

To order your copy of *A Passion for Possibilities* see p. 16.



Joy Emmanuel poses with the book – fresh off the presses.

Victoria Leadership Award

Adam Harrison

In January, Ian MacPherson, BCICS director, received a UVic Community Leadership award for the exemplary leadership displayed in his work with co-operatives. His efforts have led to tremendous gains in linking UVic with the community of Victoria for greater public benefit.

For more than 30 years, MacPherson has worked tirelessly to understand and improve co-operative organizations and co-operative learning in the service of communities. This award recognizes the unique relationship forged by MacPherson between the university and community of Victoria. Locally, he has been involved with dozens of co-operatives and served on the Board of Directors for many, including Coast Capital Savings and Peninsula Co-op. In 1999, Ian established the BC Institute for Co-operative Studies, and now directs the research organization. Internationally, he was instrumental in finalizing the 1995 International Co-operative Alliance Statement of Co-operative Identity, which added the additional principle of Concern for Community to the list of shared co-operative identity principles.

Three of MacPherson's fellow faculty at UVic also received awards. UVic chancellor, Ronald Lou-Poy, received the Lifetime Achievement award, UVic Law Center supervisor Glenn Gallins was also a Community Leadership award



UVic recipients include Ian MacPherson, Ashley Heaslip, Glenn Gallins, and Ronald Lou-Poy.

recipient, and UVic political science graduate Ashley Heaslip won the Vancity Youth Award for her work with the local chapter of the World University Service of Canada.

The Victoria Leadership Awards are organized by a partnership among Leadership Victoria, the Rotary Clubs of Greater Victoria and the University of Victoria.

BCICS Associate Wins 'Ascendant Scholar' Award

Adam Harrison

Dr. Ana María Peredo, a participant in a number of BCICS projects over the last five years, was recently honored by the Western Academy of Management, the world's largest professional association of Management Scholars. Dr. Peredo is one of four scholars to receive the title of 'Ascendant Scholar for 2007'. She received this honor in recognition of her outstanding record of research publication, as well as her teaching accomplishments and service to the profession.



Anna María during a recent visit to Peru.

The award recognizes outstanding young scholars who are out of their doctoral program for no more than seven years, and whose achievements in research, teaching and professional service show exceptional potential for future career success.

Several of Dr. Peredo's research publications related to BCICS projects helped her achieve this award. A member of the Faculty of Business at UVic, Dr. Peredo participated in projects led by Dr. Ian MacPerson concerning Rural BC Communities in the New Economy and the Social Economy Hub. She is pictured to the left on a recent visit to Perú, where she shared her research on rural BC communities with communities in the high Andes.



Anna María presents during a BCICS community research sharing forum.

Initiatives in the New Economy

Joy Emmanuel

Over the last three years we have been engaged in comprehensive research following the developments of several new co-ops on Malcolm Island and in the Nelson area of British Columbia. This has been part of the Initiatives in the New Economy project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The goal of the project has been to follow the developments of new co-ops in rural and remote communities with a particular focus on how these co-ops are affected by the changes in the marketplace, government, and technological advances, as well as how they navigate their own internal and local challenges.

After many interviews and numerous visits, we are now positioned to go back to these communities, and out to others, and offer a few insights gained through our research.

In January 2007, Ana Maria Peredo, our research associate from the Business Faculty at the University of Victoria, visited her home country of Peru and did two presentations in remote communities in the Andes. One of Ana Maria's interests is in community-based enterprises – what factors give rise to them and what contributes to their success. With our friends in Peru, she explored the similarities and differences between co-op development in small communities in the north and micro-finance and community-based enterprises in the south.

Eric Morse contrasted a standard model showing key factors that influence the success of a private business with a much more complex model for how co-operative enterprises are structured.

In February, Ana Maria, Dr MacPherson, myself, and another of our research associates, Eric Morse (formerly with University of Victoria and now with the Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario) participated



Ian MacPherson, Eric Morse, Anna Maria Peredo, and Joy Emmanuel share their research with the Victoria community.

Clearly acknowledging what is referred to in the movement as the triple bottom line (meeting economic, social, and environmental needs) is a very important starting point for considering what makes co-ops successful.

to their communities and the degree to which the co-op is viewed as a means to meet the economic and social needs of the members. This driving force must be taken into account when discerning the factors that influence the success of new co-ops. Clearly acknowledging what is referred to in the movement as the triple bottom line (meeting economic, social, and environmental needs) is a very important starting point for considering what makes co-ops successful.

In the coming months we will be doing more community presentations around the province. We are also working on a publication (due out in the fall of 2007) that will allow us to elaborate further on the challenge and success factors of new co-ops.

in two more community presentations, one in Victoria and the other in Nelson. Over 20 enthusiastic co-operators turned out for each gathering. In his presentation, Eric Morse contrasted a standard model showing key factors that influence the success of a private business with a much more complex model for how co-operative enterprises are structured.

Although we are still sifting through the volumes of information collected, some preliminary findings point to a few factors that influence the success of new co-ops in rural communities of B.C.

Many of the factors noted above can indeed be flipped around and, when realigned in a supportive manner, may greatly enhance the likelihood of success. However, the primary motivating factor in the life of the co-op comes back to the benefits to individual members and



Joy Emmanuel posing with another BCICS publication.

Effective Practices

Joy Emmanuel

The Effective Practices project (formerly Best Practices) is entering the home stretch. The project began in December 2005 and was scheduled to run until June of this year. In the first stage of the project, we met with 10 of the most experienced co-op developers from across the country for a two-day intensive retreat with a focus on identifying the critical issues in co-op development. The discussion highlighted the complexity and breadth of factors that influence both co-op development and the success of new co-ops in Canada.

Following that discussion, we asked each of these developers to write a paper on a particular aspect of co-op development that fell within their area of expertise and passion. These papers would highlight their insights on effective practices that might positively influence the success of new co-ops. Over these past months, the developers have been busy with their writing and we have been gathering these articles for a publication due out later this spring.

During this period, I have had the opportunity to interview another 18 developers throughout English-speaking Canada, while Daniel Côte has completed eight interviews with co-op development experts from Québec. These interviews have provided an abundance of rich insights into many aspects of co-op development both at the local level, where developers are supporting members of fledgling co-ops in designing business plans and understanding co-op structures of governance, and at a regional and national level, where issues such as the role of the co-op sector are examined and the impact of government policy and funding opportunities need to be considered.

We are very excited about this upcoming publication which identifies many of the challenges faced by both co-op members and developers, and at the same time, offers insights and creative solutions that may be adopted as effective practices to support the growth and success of new co-ops.

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Throughout this lengthy and in-depth dialogue with developers, we have been continually asked about the use of the term “best practices.” The primary concern is the term seems to indicate there is an optimum way of doing development work, when indeed, a strategy that is very appropriate in one situation might have disastrous results in another setting. Developers identified many factors that must be considered in deciding how to effectively work with a group and indicated that they were always changing their approach from one project to the next. The notion of “best practices” was viewed as indicating that there is a basic “recipe” for doing co-op development, a “best way,” or a “one size fits all” approach. But as our discussions and interviews revealed, nothing could be further from an effective approach to co-op development.

The notion of “best practices” was viewed as indicating that there is a basic “recipe” for doing co-op development, a “best way,” or a “one size fits all” approach. But as our discussions and interviews revealed, nothing could be further from an effective approach to co-op development.

In the final months of the project, we are completing the Effective Practices publication, working on a video based on our two days of discussions with developers, and we have a line-up of conferences to attend where developers will make presentations and give workshops sharing their insights on co-op development. Look for us at the national CoopZone gathering in Guelph, May 15 to 17; the SSHRC Congress and gathering of Canadian Association for Co-operative Studies (CASC) in Saskatoon, May 28 to June 1; and at the CCA Annual General meeting in St John’s, June 27 to 29. As spring progresses into summer, we will also be busy crafting an Effective Practices web page where you can access many of the materials we gathered over the course of this project.

On a final note, I invite you to contact me if you have thoughts, questions, comments and/or insights on co-op development that you would like to share: joybcics@uvic.ca

CIRIEC Research Conference Update

Lindsay Kearns

The website for the First International CIRIEC Research Conference on the Social Economy has been launched! You can check it out for yourself by visiting <http://conference.se-es.ca> or selecting the link from the main CSEHub website (<http://www.socialeconomynetwork.ca>). Registration for the conference is currently open, with both online and printable options available on the conference website. You'll also find information about pre-conference tours, a conference schedule, profiles of some of our plenary speakers, and more!

In response to the conference Call for Papers, CSEHub received over 250 abstracts, with submissions from six continents. To date, two speakers have been confirmed for the conference. They are Gar Alperovitz, who currently holds the Lionel R. Bauman Professor of Political Economy at the University of Maryland, and Wanda Wuttunee, a scholar of economic development strategies of Canadian Aboriginal communities. Special events for conference participants include a Gala Local Foods Dinner at the BC Maritime Museum, and a trip to the Quw'utsun' Cultural Centre in Duncan. Space for the conference is limited, so register soon!

Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships

Annie McKittrick

A new logo and name has been developed to identify the Nodes and National Partners involved in the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded research on the Social Economy. In March, 2007, the CSEHub Board, consisting of delegates from each of the six regional research nodes and practitioner organizations, agreed to the *Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships/ Centre canadien de recherché partenariale en économie sociale*. The name was chosen to reflect the nature of the research, which is a partnership between university and practitioners/acteurs. The new logo can be downloaded from the CSEHub website.



CIRIEC Research Conference Website

More CSEHub Telelearning Sessions Available

Lindsay Kearns

CSEHub's monthly telelearning sessions have been gaining in popularity, with near-capacity attendance! On February 22nd, we heard from Dr. Heather Myers of UNBC in Prince George and Debbie Fields of Food Share in Toronto as they each presented on the subject of linkages between food security and the social economy. More recently, the April 26th session featured John Loxley and Shauna MacKinnon discussing the evolution of Community Economic Development policy in Québec and Manitoba. Audio files from these events, as well as previous telelearning sessions, are available for download at the CSEHub telelearning webpage at http://www.socialeconomynetwork.ca/hub/index.php?page_id=129.

Also at this page, you'll find additional resources for each telelearning topic, including articles, PowerPoint presentations, and links to relevant websites.

In response to demand, CSEHub is currently preparing a telelearning compact disc for distribution. Called "Social Economy 101", this bilingual disc will feature of our first two telelearning sessions, one in French and one in English, and will serve as an audio introduction to defining the social economy in Canada.



Social Economy Student Network

Janel Smith

The Canadian Social Economy Hub (CSEHub) is in the process of establishing an online Student Network on the Social Economy. The purpose of the Social Economy Student Network (SESN) is to serve as a forum for academic dialogue, information dispersal and education on the Social Economy (SE). When completed, the Network will bring together students and researchers interested in the Social Economy in order to create synergy and form intellectually-stimulating and diverse peer networks within, and beyond, the academic research environment.

The SESN functions as a multi-disciplinary virtual space that fosters the growth of knowledge and information-sharing networks among members. The Network enables students to acquire and share research and related information that deals with aspects of the Social Economy. This includes, but is not limited to, academic papers and research projects, a SE bibliography, upcoming conferences and calls for papers, online seminars and lectures on the SE, resources on conducting SE-based research, existing university-level courses and programs with a particular SE focus, employment opportunities or practicums and community-based initiatives.



Working prototype of the Social Economy Student Network.

The SESN website centralizes the Network's content and coordinates the activities of Network members. It provides access to a wide range of materials and resources on the Social Economy and enables members to find and network with one another through a range of sources. The SESN will be launched in May 2007. For more information please contact Janel Smith, SESN Coordinator, by email at janel@uvic.ca.

Yves Vaillancourt Visit

Lindsey Kearns

This past March, the Canadian Social Economy Hub and the Canadian Community Economic Development Network were delighted to host a visit from Dr. Yves Vaillancourt of the University of Québec in Montreal. On March 8th, Dr. Vaillancourt presented a talk entitled *The Social Economy: An Experiment with Community Activation in Québec*. On March 9th, he presented a lecture on the similarities and differences between Community Economic Development, Social Enterprise, and the Social Economy. Both events were well-attended by welcoming audiences.

As a professor of Social Work, Dr. Vaillancourt has contributed to research on the Social Economy through his role as the founding editor of the journal *Nouvelles Pratiques Sociales*, and as the director of the LAREPPS (Laboratoire de recherche sur les pratiques et les politiques sociales) research project. Currently, he is involved with the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) on the Social Economy, based at UQAM, and the Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales (CRISES), an inter-university and multi-disciplinary research centre that analyzes innovation and social change.



Dr. Yves Vaillancourt speaking at the University of Victoria.



Examining Ethical Purchasing

Debbie Dergousoff, Co-organizer of the Forum

In February, 2007, the BC Institute for Co-operative Studies, in collaboration with the Canadian Fair Trade Student Network, the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group, the Values Based Business Network, and the Canadian Social Economy Hub, hosted a two-day Ethical Purchasing Forum at the University of Victoria. The Forum was designed to bring together co-operative and ethical trade practitioners, institutions, active citizens, and academics to explore issues of ethical trade, to develop policies for ethical trade at municipal and institutional levels, and to provide support for ethical trade in the Victoria region. While there is much debate on what constitutes fair and ethical trade, the sessions were organized to foster a spirit of appreciation for common goals and obstacles and to support creative alternatives. Co-operatives were among some of the creative alternatives presented.

Currently in the first year of my PhD program in Sociology at Simon Fraser University, my general research interests concern democratic development strategies, global commodity chains, and fair trade coffee production. Fair trade coffee is a system of socially just commodity trade that assures coffee farmers a stable price in a wildly fluctuating international market that has typically shown little regard for their livelihood. Since the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement in 1989, coffee producers have been subjected to the vagaries of 'free markets' dominated by a handful of transnational corporations. Oxfam America (2002) reports that overproduction and flooding of the market with cheap, low-grade coffee resulted in an almost 70% drop in prices between 1997 and 2002. This price volatility has had devastating effects for some 25 million families on four continents, many of whom are unable to meet the production costs of growing and harvesting coffee, much less of sustaining a livelihood from it. Fair trade coffee and indigenous fair trade coffee farmers are situated not only amidst complex understandings of 'fair' and 'socially just' trade, but also amidst the complexities of internationally regulated and de-regulated commodity trade, where notions of 'fair' and 'socially just' are highly contested. At the heart of co-operative models are concepts of sustainability, democracy, and community involvement. Co-operative organizing has played an important role in empowering fair trade coffee farmers to establish more

equitable trade relations with Northern trading partners.

It was both an honor and a delight to have Francisco VanderHoff Boersma here from Oaxaca, Mexico to represent the views of coffee farmers at our Forum. I first encountered Francisco through his case study of the Union of Indigenous Communities of the Isthmus Region (UCIRI), a Mexican organization of coffee farmer co-operatives that has a long history of involvement with the fair trade movement. Francisco has lived with [and "like these people", as he said during his supper keynote address] for over 20 years. Francisco was instrumental in establishing UCIRI

Fairly Traded T-Shirts for Sale!

The Ethical Purchasing Forum is selling fairly traded shirts produced by the Single Mother's Co-operative in El Salvador and sold through Just Shirts in Calgary. The 'Solidarity, Justice, Co-operation' design was created by local artist Luis Mario Guerra and Tsunami Print n' Sew, a Victoria-based business, donated their printing services. Tsunami sprouted from the desire to create a globally sustainable, non-hierarchical and environmentally conscious artist's co-operative in Victoria, BC. When designing their wide range of unique clothing and art work, they use only locally made, sweatshop free and/or fairly traded garments. As a result of this exchange, Tsunami now plans to source their shirts through JustShirts.

-Sol Kinnis

While Fair Trade covers many agricultural commodities traded on the world market, the tea produced in ways that consider the social and environmental impacts and that are made ethically, the Fair Trade movement seemed a natural direction for the Ethical Purchasing Forum.

The session "From Farm to Campus: Local Food Purchasing at UVic" was a roundtable discussion to investigate the barriers to local food purchasing at UVic. The session included representatives from various UVic departments and was of great interest in supporting local agriculture. The purpose of looking at UVic purchasing in part was to source food locally.



With UVic purchasing at the table, farmers and UVic has three methods for purchasing: large spot buying for specific events; and specialized purchasing and are awarded based on quality, reliability, and ability to 'supply as much from local as possible', but also push for that has to come from the consumers.

Among the challenges facing UVic purchasers are high land prices and must pay higher wages in some regions. A further barrier to favoring local over imported is the agreement TILMA and their associated restrictions. Participants and participants were hopeful that the session could be found at: <http://www.common>



and involving them in the original effort to launch a standardized fair trade label (Max Havelaar in Holland, 1989). The success of this initial effort led to subsequent initiatives in other countries and the eventual formation of Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO). Established in Bonn, Germany, in 1997, the FLO system provides a label for products which guarantees that farmers have been paid a 'fair' price for their coffee. (The FLO affiliate and national labeling body for the Canadian market is TransFair Canada.) Although UCIRI benefits widely in both social and economic terms from fair trade, Francisco and I share some important

critiques of certified systems of fair trade.

Different starting points, different relations to the world economy, and different cultural and political contexts can combine to produce diverse perceptions about what it means to be 'socially just.' The past few decades have seen various ethical or fair trade initiatives emerge to deal with the separation of producer from consumer. The initiatives have been diverse in form, ranging from small informally regulated forms of ethical trade to internationally verifiable forms and systems, i.e. certified Fair Trade standards. Although the certified Fairtrade label has contributed to rapid growth of fair trade coffee market share, the system has been criticized, particularly by Southern trading partners, for its focus on market growth at the expense of transformation of existing relations of trade. My Master's research of small, informally regulated coffee roasters in the Victoria region likewise demonstrated that while universal verification fits well with a mode of Northern economic distribution and consumption patterns on a grand scale, it dismisses the possibility of creative beings realizing their common humanity in small, local ways. This Forum was important because it brought together many different views so that the complexities involved in ethical trade could be more deeply appreciated. The important role co-operatives have to play in initiatives for ethical trade was also highlighted.

The co-operative model is a natural for fair trade because co-operative enterprises are: 1) owned and controlled by their members, and 2) as diverse in their structure as they are in members. Indeed, the BC Institute for Co-operative Studies website (2007) suggests "like people, it is impossible to create categories and expect every co-op to fit into only one."

Johnston Birchall (1994) points out that one of the fundamental reasons for the success of the Rochdale Pioneers in Britain was good business principles and exceptional leadership whose social goals focused on the benefit of members, rather than on private gain. The Rochdale style of consumer co-operative became the norm for others to follow because it clearly demonstrated a model that worked effectively to the benefit of all. The 'fair trade' movement, like the original Rochdale consumer co-operative movement, grew slowly at first, but has gained notable momentum in the past decade, due in part, to the initiation of the FLO Fair Trade label in 1997. The co-operative movement in Canada has been slow, compared to Europe, to recognize opportunities to rally and respond to this trend.

At The Co-operative Model: A Tool for Ethical Trade workshop I was surprised to learn that La Siembra is one of only four co-

term 'ethical purchasing' was used to include a broader array of products that can be either internationally or right here at home. Bringing advocates of local food together with

discussion organized by Megan Thom of the University of Victoria Sustainability Project toatives at different points along the supply chain, from farmer to consumer and each with an particular was to develop a realistic understanding and potential model for other institutions in

and consumers could better understand the decision making process for food procurement. contracts with huge volumes and daily deliveries (there is no warehouse at the university); and longer-term contracts for specific items. Most food contracts are for three or more years delivery, and other criteria that can be set through policy. Currently, contractors are required t in order to provide more support for local farmers, there needs to be stronger policy. The s (students and staff).

are the campus-wide price limits that are often too low to support local farmers who ges, and the lower quantity of food produced on Vancouver Island as compared to other r other markets is that of NAFTA and the recently backroom signed BC-Alberta trade ions. The members of the panel supported a quarterly forum for discussing these issues was a useful step towards greater local food procurement on campus. (Notes for this energy.org/wiki/Food_forum_notes_Feb24)

-Sol Kinnis



The BCICS was pleased to work with OPEN CINEMA in a joint screening of the film *Black Gold: A Look at Fair Trade and the Global Economy of Coffee*. The film is a documentary by Nick and Mark Francis that follows Tadesse Meskela in his mission to find a fair price for the farmers he represents. Through his journey along the coffee supply chain from the farmers in Ethiopia to the consumers of North America we get a strong sense of the struggles of coffee farmers in Ethiopia and the injustices inherent in the multinational commodity market. “New York commodity traders, the international coffee exchanges, and the double dealings of trade ministers at the World Trade Organization reveal the many challenges Tadesse faces in his quest for a long term solution for his farmers.” (See: <http://blackgoldmovie.com/story.php>).

-Sol Kinnis

operatives listed among TransFair Canada’s 201 licensees. Jacqui MacDonald, an international fair and ethical trade consultant, reported that one of the developments arising from the Fairtrade Towns initiative in Britain has been co-operative retail outlets that exclusively offer Fairtrade certified products, leaving spaces on the shelf when and where such products are not (yet) available. Opportunities for expanding fair trade within the co-operative movement in Canada have yet to be explored on a wide scale. The fact that the direction such opportunities take has not yet been established in Canada provides opportunities for creative innovation which can have beneficial outcomes for both movements. Northern co-operative models may provide distinct opportunities to offer alternatives to FLO-certification by expanding small, local markets. This idea takes both fair trade and the co-operative movement back to their origins where the agendas of both can be re-thought (and re-worked). The time to strengthen the connection between ‘fair trade’ and co-operatives in Canada, with an eye on innovative ways to co-operate for fair trade, could not be better. The co-operative model not only provides a framework for critiquing issues of fair trade, but also provides an alternative way to organize the Northern market for fair trade. I would like to see a future Ethical Purchasing Forum focus on questions such as: Why are co-operatives so important on the Southern end of distribution chains and infrequently a part of Northern fair trade distribution? What is the current role and extent of co-operation in Canadian fair trade? What imbalances exist in North/South trade relations in terms of fair trade in Canada? What opportunities can co-operation present for addressing imbalances in North/South fair trade relations?

For more information on the forum, current postings related to ethical trade or to post your own ideas, visit our website at ethicalpurchasing.bcics.org

MEC Ethical Sourcing Director Shares Experiences

Continued from p. 1

industry is on the decline and suppliers are moving overseas. The remainder of MEC-brand products are made in 16 countries around the world, with the vast majority of their foreign-manufactured goods being made in Vietnam and China.

MEC’s website states, “the rights of a Chinese worker are equal to those of a Canadian. As a citizen of the global community, we have a moral obligation to do what we can for workers throughout our supply chain.” Yet MEC, a leader in ethical sourcing, knows well the challenges in implementing that principal. Among them, MEC is a relatively small supplier in the production of global commodities. “Making MEC-brand product is a small fraction of an average factory’s business. In a year with 362 production days, one of them might be spent making MEC gear. Within that single day workers may be making several brands including ours.” (www.mec.ca)

Having seen first hand the challenges workers face,



Harvey Chan is MEC’s Director of Ethical Sourcing.

Chan is both realistic and optimistic that consumers can force factories to improve the wages and working conditions of the people who make what we buy.

Update on the Co-operative Learning Centre (CLC)

Adam Harrison

The Co-operative Learning Centre (CLC) continues to grow and expand. The CLC development team recently produced a wide variety of new content for the website, including a translation of most of the site's resources into Spanish and some introductory information on co-operatives for youth and others seeking to learn about the co-op model.

The CLC content management system has also been migrated to a new Drupal-based system. Drupal allows CLC users to easily publish, manage and organize a wide variety of content and resources and offers a wide variety of new functions for the website.

"Some of the new functionality provided by Drupal includes event calendars, individual accounts can have their own blogs, there's an online bibliography, a built-in discussion forum, online polls, and site users can send each other secure private messages," says Robin Puga, CLC development team lead. "But the biggest benefit of switching to Drupal is how it handles translations. Basically if someone is a language partner and they are browsing the site, they have the option of translating the page they are reading. This means if someone finds an interesting resource in another language they can translate it into their own language for others to read."

Another benefit of using Drupal is that it is a popular Open Source project and is changing and evolving at a fantastically rapid rate, meaning it continues to become more stable and feature-rich everyday.

"Using Drupal allows us to capitalize on this rapid evolution and stability without the cost of proprietary software or the cost of programming it ourselves," Puga says.

These new improvements to the CLC site were made possible, in large part, by a significant project grant from the International Labor Organization (ILO) received last summer.

"A project like the CLC would not be possible were it not for the generous help we've received from the ILO," says Puga.

Launching the New BCICS Website

Robin Puga

In May, BCICS completed the initial round of updates to the Institute's main website. The website has always served as the central connection portal for all of the Institute's projects and resources; the new site continues this tradition and additionally offers many new features to inform and engage students, educators, and the public. New sections like an Introduction to Co-operative Studies, Research Themes, Publications, Resources, and News and Events provide better accessibility to the existing website content. The new software used to run the website allows all BCICS staff to collaboratively maintain the website content. Staff with little or no HTML experience can edit pages, post events, and add new content to the site.

BCICS continues to utilize Open Source technologies in creating its collaborative online resources – it was only

"The project is progressing well but requires ongoing financial assistance for its development to continue."

The CLC development team continues to work with and establish new partner organizations around the world. Recently, the CLC team has helped test www.hrd.coop, a sister site focusing on co-operative human resource development. This website is maintained by VAMNICOM, an education and networking centre in India. VAMNICOM's website allows co-op training and educational institutions to add information about their institution's courses and training programs. Its functionality will dovetail with the CLC in the future.

In 2004, BCICS joined forces with the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and the International Labour Organization to develop a collaborative online resource. This virtual resource centre became a valuable tool for the international co-operative community called The Co-operative Learning Centre.

The CLC is a multilingual, multimedia, online resource containing valuable information on the effective use of the co-operative model. It provides access to information, training, research, resources and networks in order to facilitate co-operative education and development for anyone with access to a web browser. All resources on the CLC are classified according to type, themes, and geographical regions, making it easy to navigate and search for information. The CLC, which has received much positive feedback, can be viewed at: www.learningcentre.coop. The CLC is managed by BCICS through the University of Victoria's Internet facilities, ensuring a reliable, secure and fast Internet connection, as well as solid security for the CLC data.

fitting to create this new website using a popular Open Source project. Drupal is a free modular content management system (CMS). With its focus on providing support for non-profit organisations, Drupal promotes itself as "Community Plumbing" software. The ever-expanding development community of programmers and web developers that utilize Drupal for their online projects also co-operatively support the Drupal Open Source project with their time and effort. Community members contribute powerful new features to the Drupal core, create and share modules for specific features that can be "plugged" into the core system, and provide knowledgeable and dedicated technical support through the discussion forums on the Drupal project website. For more information on Drupal please visit: <http://www.drupal.org>.



Growing Community from the Roof Up Reflections on Community Economic Development in Montreal

Megan Thom

When I arrived on a rainy afternoon in Montreal to start my summer job with the Rooftop Gardens Project, I had very little idea what community economic development (CED) was. It was my first time in the city and definitely my first time working in a rooftop garden. Over the course of the summer, I learned a lot about growing plants, relationships, and healthy communities.

When I returned to Victoria, I was asked by BCICS to share my experiences with a contingent of visiting community economic developers from Ukraine. (For more information see: <http://web.uvic.ca/bcics/index.html> - scroll down to: Presentations from Ukrainian Delegation Visits) My first reaction was, "Who, me?" I still don't know a lot about CED, but being asked to speak spurred me to further reflect on what I learned this summer. In this article, I've highlighted four lessons for community development that seem fundamental to the success of the Rooftop Gardens Project. I hope these reflections may benefit other co-ops and community projects as well.

The Rooftop Gardens Project (RTG) is a youth and volunteer-driven project that grows food on six rooftops in Montreal and Quebec City for community food organizations and senior citizens. In addition to food production, the RTG also holds educational events and community celebrations to raise the profile of food security and local food issues. The project is not an organization in itself, but rather an initiative of two community organizations in Montreal—Alternatives and the Santropol Roulant. Through this and other projects, these organizations endeavor to create healthy cities by producing food, overcoming social isolation, and by providing the ecological benefits of rooftop gardens—such as the filtering



Over the course of the summer, I learned a lot about growing plants, relationships, and healthy communities.



of pollutants in air and rainwater, providing wildlife habitat, decreasing temperatures in the summer, and insulating buildings in the winter.

Alternatives Action and Communication Network for International Development created this local urban agriculture project as a response to the problems of social and economic inequality and ecological degradation that their organization works with internationally. Alternatives brings an international network of resources and technical expertise to the project, while drawing inspiration from urban agriculture projects in Morocco, Cuba, Mexico, and Senegal.

The Santropol Roulant, the destination of two of the six gardens, is a volunteer-driven intergenerational meals-on-wheels program. The Roulant uses food as a vehicle to break social and economic isolation between generations and to strengthen and nourish the local community. It provides up to 90 meals every day, 6 days a week, 52 weeks a year. These meals are prepared and delivered by primarily young volunteers to primarily elderly clients throughout Montreal. The rooftop gardens provide fresh organic ingredients, which fulfilled one third of the kitchen's produce needs during the growing season in 2006.

After a summer working with the RTG, four lessons for community development stand out to me as things that are key to the success of the project. First is the value of cooperation between two very different organizations. Alternatives and the Santropol Roulant have different mandates, target populations and strengths to bring to the project. The RTG would not exist without the international connections and technical expertise of Alternatives, nor could it function without the Santropol Roulant's strong connections with the community, ability to engage and mobilize



“At Santropol Roulant, a person is seen as offering gifts, and these gifts must be respected and used. A person is seen as having gifts, and these gifts must be nurtured and cultivated. And a person is seen as being, him or herself, a gift. And this gift must be honored and cherished.” From the book *The Southern Wall*.

young volunteers, and an infrastructure that provides a meaningful destination for the food grown.

Second, the importance of providing an inspiring vision to engage volunteers and broader community. The image of a garden on every roof is an idea that opens up new possibilities and keeps people enthusiastic and coming back to the project. It is a vision to which the organizers of the RTG are passionately

committed, and that commitment is infectious. This project demonstrates that if you engage peoples’ imaginations, their energies will follow.

Third is the utmost importance of engaging volunteers. The Santropol Roulant is well-known for its exceptional ability to engage and maintain volunteers, particularly youth. *The Southern Wall: The Art of Engagement at the Santropol*

Roulant, a book written by a volunteer, W.O. Nilsson, delves into what it is that makes the Roulant so special.* This is my favourite quote, which I feel encapsulates the Roulant's attitude towards the people they involve:



At Santropol Roulant, a person is seen as offering gifts, and these gifts must be respected and used. A person is seen as having gifts, and these gifts must be nurtured and cultivated. And a person is seen as being, him or herself, a gift. And this gift must be honored and cherished” (43).

This, to me, is the essence of good engagement, and the rooftop garden strives to put this into practice. The RTG puts this philosophy into action by providing a space for volunteers to contribute whatever skills and gifts they have and by creating a nurturing environment where volunteers and their gifts can grow as they help plants to grow. The RTG welcomes each individual as a unique and valuable gift to the project and the community. I believe that seeing people as threefold gifts revolutionizes personal relationships in community development initiatives.

Finally, this summer taught me about the importance of connection. At its most basic level, the RTG provides food for those in need in Montreal. However, its implications extend far beyond the quantity of food produced. I believe this project goes to the root of the most pressing social, economic and ecological problems. In essence, the project creates connections—connections between people and place that are largely severed in urban environments. First, the project allows a space for people to reconnect with the earth and the natural processes that provide their daily sustenance. Second, the project

acts as a vehicle for overcoming social isolation and making meaningful connections with a community through working and celebrating together. And finally, participants strengthen connections within themselves through the psychological and spiritual values of growing things. This internal connection is formed through the empowerment of caring for another living thing and cultivating one's own sustenance. Internal connection also comes from that reconnection with the source of one's food and with those who grow and consume it.

In essence, the project creates connections—connections between people and place that are largely severed in urban environments.

Through these connections, food becomes more than a commodity grown in anonymous places by anonymous people. The act of growing food empowers, and the sharing of food, labour and knowledge brings people together across age, linguistic, cultural, ethnic and economic divides. My summer in Montreal showed me what can be accomplished by communities engaging in this simple and ancient act of cultivating and eating food together. These connections have implications and effects that can be felt far beyond the rooftops of the gardens. I am still a novice in the world of community economic development, but, at the root of it all, it seems to me that there can be nothing more fundamental than this.



*The Southern Wall: The Art of Engagement at the Santropol Roulant is available online in English and French at www.santropolroulant.org. Also check out www.rooftopgardens.ca for more information about the project.

Megan's internship with the Rooftop Gardens Project was generously supported by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. She is now back in Montreal working for the Millennium Foundation and growing food on the rooftops of Montreal.

Radio Show Update

Adam Harrison

Get ready to tune in for another great season of co-operative radio. Each for All, a radio show about co-operatives, is heading into its fourth season this summer on CFUV 101.9 FM. Despite a few changes to the show's format and schedule, the hosts say they couldn't be happier with the way things are progressing.

In January, a scheduling conflict forced Each for All, which aired once a week for half-an-hour, to adopt a one-hour format that broadcasts every two weeks. The show also moved back to Thursdays, and now shares the 11am-Noon timeslot with Winds of Change (<http://web.mac.com/jbandcroft/> and click on Radio Podcast).

"The move from a half-hour show to a full-hour show was a little daunting at first, but it now feels like less work to cram everything we want to do into a show," says co-host Robin Puga. "We can now explore our subjects in further detail."

Season three of the popular radio show covered a variety of topics, including a visit to the Canadian Co-operative Association's Institute of Co-operative Studies and an examination of Health Care Co-operatives in BC. This season's shows also developed the theme of Ethical Purchasing. This was in conjunction with the BCICS' Ethical Purchasing Forum. A CD recording of Each for All's, Ethical Purchasing 101, is due out in Summer 2007.

Robin, along with fellow host Eryk Martin, interviewed Jacquie MacDonald (Values Based Business Network and Ethical Purchasing Consultant), Ian Hussey (Canadian Student Fair Trade Network), and Megan Thom from the University of Victoria's Sustainability Project. Megan visited after the Ethical Purchasing Forum and shared the fruits of her discussion group which examined the University of Victoria's Purchasing Policy



<http://bcics.uvic.ca/radio>

with an eye to ethical trade and sustainable, local food sourcing.

In Spring 2007, Robin and Eryk finished editing Each for All's four-part series Co-operatives 101.

"The series gives listeners a solid understanding of what the co-operative movement is all about," says Robin. "We explore the history of the co-operative movement in Canada and examine who is currently involved. We also take a look at what co-operatives are currently doing, at home and abroad."

Co-operatives 101 features interviews with Victoria co-op participants and developers involved at all levels, including BCICS director Ian MacPherson. CDs of the series are available from the BCICS office or you can request one through the Each for All website. <http://bcics.uvic.ca/radio>

If you happened to miss a broadcast of Each for All, past episodes of the show are available for download from the Each for All website, maintained by BCICS staff. The comprehensive site offers listeners supplementary information for each show, as well as extended interviews. Listeners can also subscribe to the Each for All podcast to automatically download episodes as they are posted to the site.

***Listen to Each for All ***

Every second Thursday, 11am-Noon, on CFUV 101.9FM
in Victoria or listen

live online at <http://cfuv.uvic.ca>

Listen to podcasts of past shows anytime at
<http://bcics.uvic.ca/radio>



What's new in the Saxena Library?

If you haven't come to visit us, come down to our library or check it out the on-line. Here's an overview of some of the materials we've recently added to our Saxena Library collection:

The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan after the Taliban.

Book and audio CDs by Sarah Chayes. New York: The Penguin Press.

As the world watches Afghanistan from the perspective of the West's War on Terror and its supposed rebuilding of a democratic state, another story is taking place in Afghanistan. Author, aide and witness to what has been unfolding since the fall of the Taliban, Sarah Chayes shares a unique perspective on misguided U.S. policy and the return of warlordism in Afghanistan. The book sets the stage for the development of a soap manufacturing co-operative in Afghanistan, which can be found online at: <http://www.arghand.org/>

New Perspectives on Conflict Resolution: Civil Society, the People-to-People Peace Process, Sustainable Human Development.

Conference Paper by Dr. Yehudah Paz, Chairperson of the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development, Israel. 2007.

"Peace will take root and flourish only in conditions of growing mutual confidence, of deepening mutual understanding and knowledge, of a process of effective cooperation." writes Dr. Paz. "Moreover, conflict resolution must find concrete and immediate expression in the economic and social realities of people's lives."

In this paper, Yehudah Paz focuses on new perspectives on the steps to conflict resolution. He describes "the people-to-people peace process" and the link between conflict resolution and sustainable human development. These new concepts of conflict resolution "point to ways of moving from violent conflict to the cessation of violence, then to post-conflict co-existence and further to the resolution of conflict. Or, risking slogan-like simplicity, from enemies to neighbors, from neighbors to partners, from partners to friends."

Communities Under Pressure: The Role of Co-operatives and the Social Economy

Synthesis Report. June 2006. Government of Canada.

This report is a synthesis of presentations made by policy makers, researchers and practitioners at the Communities Under Pressure conference held at the University of Saskatchewan. The report identifies research findings and suggests policy implications and questions for future research on the responses of organizations and governments to the challenges communities face as a result of globalization.

The Saxena Library includes a large collection of proceedings from academic, government and practitioner-oriented conferences on co-operatives and the social economy in Canada and internationally. All of the catalogued materials may be accessed on-line. If you cannot find what you are looking for in our catalogue, ask us, as the library also contains an extensive collection of uncatalogued materials.

The Saxena Library is open to the public during regular office hours. Reference services are available by email, phone or in person.

BCICS Summer Staff of 2006



(left to right) Sol Kinnis, Joy Emmanuel, Janel Smith, Ian MacPherson, Vivian McCormick, Jeremy Kirouac, Eryk Martin, Sandy Polomark, Annie McKittrick, and Robin Puga, plus Lindsay Kearns (absent).

Publications Available - Order Online!

A Passion for Possibilities: Co-operatives and Communities in British Columbia

Find insights into the relationships, both historical and contemporary, between co-operatives and the communities in which they are located. Learn how co-ops in B.C. adapt and flourish as they seek to maintain a control over their destiny.

Practical Dreamers: Communitarianism and Co-operatives on Malcolm Island

An exciting examination of how the people of Malcolm Island use their community resources to fashion a distinct way of life.

Each title is \$21.95 plus applicable taxes and postage. Order and more online at <http://bcics.uvic.ca/orders> or contact us to arrange purchase:

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