

CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY *AND* ENERGIZING THE CO-OPERATIVE BRAND

International Symposium

 Online, free

 May 19-21, 2026

 Pre-Symposium
Workshop, May 14

WELCOME

identitysymposium2026.coop



**Saint Mary's
University**

International Centre
for Co-operative
Management

In collaboration with:



northwest
cooperative
development center

The Online Home of Cooperatives



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Contents

ITEM	PAGE
Welcome	3
Organizing Partners	3
Social Media Links/tags	3
Symposium Themes	4
Technology	4
Interpretation/languages	4
Summary Schedule	5
Detailed Schedule and Session Descriptions	7
Speaker Biographies	18
Other Programs Coming Up at the Centre	25

Schedule May Be Updated

Please note that the schedule may have adjustments and updates leading up to the event, so be sure to come back to identitysymposium2026.coop to reference the latest schedule and details.



Welcome to the Symposium!

Building on the momentum of the second [United Nations International Year of Co-operatives](#) (2025), this symposium will focus on bolstering the co-operative sector's connectivity, reputation, and engagement. Anchored in alignment with the [co-operative identity](#), we will tackle brand image and its intersections with marketing, communications, and culture.

This event offers a collaborative space for leaders to share insights and practices, build the network, and inspire collective action.

Leads:

Erin Hancock, ICCM Saint Mary's University
(erin.hancock@smu.ca)

Tom Ivey, DotCoop

John McNamara, Northwest Cooperative Development Center

Organizing Partners:

This event is organized collectively between the International Centre for Co-operative Management and [DotCoop](#) as well as [Northwest Cooperative Development Centre](#). The event supported by [Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada](#).

About the International Centre for Co-operative Management:

The International Centre for Co-operative Management is located in the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University in Nova Scotia/Mi'kma'ki territory, Canada. The

Centre exists to elevate the global co-operative sector (serving all types of co-operatives, including credit unions) through education, research, and knowledge dissemination. The Centre was originally formed to provide a customized Master's program in co-operative management to meet a need identified by the co-operative sector. Leaders sprung to action which resulted in the incorporation of the [Co-operative Management Education Co-operative](#) in 2001 and over \$1 million in financial support (CMEC now has 80+ global members).

The Centre continues to offer the [Master's program](#), while [Centre program staff and faculty](#) additionally offer a [Certificate in Co-operative Management](#), [international co-operative study tours](#) and [executive leadership development courses](#), [conduct and publish research](#), [host symposia](#), [offer webinars](#) and more.

More at: managementstudies.coop

Share about your learning and insights:

[Facebook](#) (@CoopMgmt), [Linked In](#), [Instagram](#) (@CoopMgmt)
[#coopidentitysymposium2026](#)

You can show your thanks:

Thank you to financial contributions from DotCoop and the Northwest Cooperative Development Centre, the Centre was able to cover most organizing costs of this events. Thank you generously to all speakers.

If you are pleased to have had access to this event at no cost, you can show your thanks through contributing to the Centre's bursary fund, helping make co-operative management education accessible to co-ops and co-operators in need. You can [click this link](#) to make a charitable donation today. Thank you!

Symposium themes:

Assessing authenticity: Labels and certifications

Explore how labels and certifications can demonstrate genuine co-operative values and practices in an increasingly crowded marketplace. Examine how authenticity is assessed, maintained, and communicated to avoid greenwashing or value dilution. Participants will discuss best practices for using certification as a tool for trust, transparency, and accountability.

Effective branding: Co-operative identity, positioning, and messaging

This theme focuses on defining and expressing a clear co-operative brand that reflects shared values and member ownership. It looks at how co-operatives can position themselves distinctively while remaining true to their principles. Sessions will address consistent messaging that resonates with members, customers, and wider stakeholders, creating co-operative resilience.

Marketing the co-operative advantage

Discover how co-operatives can articulate and promote what makes them different from investor-owned businesses. Explore strategies for translating values such as democratic ownership, community impact, and fairness into compelling marketing narratives. The focus is on turning purpose into a competitive advantage. This stream also explores marketing campaigns and cases, as well as tools and tactics for effective marketing for a co-operative.

Communicating co-operative identity and building co-operative culture (internally and externally)

Examine how co-operative identity is lived, not just stated, through everyday communication and practice. Consider how internal culture, member engagement, and staff understanding strengthen external credibility. Participants will explore ways to align internal values with external communications to build trust and cohesion.

Resonating in the contemporary digital landscape

Learn how co-operatives can effectively connect with audiences in fast-changing digital environments. Explore the use of digital platforms, storytelling, and data to amplify co-operative values and engagement. The focus is on staying relevant, visible, and authentic online while adapting to emerging trends.

Technology:

Events will be held on Zoom. There is one zoom registration for all events happening May 19-21. You can simply log in at the time of your desired session (s) to join. There is a separate zoom registration for the pre-symposium workshop on May 14. You will have the chance to chat with other participants using the zoom chat function. At times you will be able to unmute to ask questions.

Language and interpretation:

Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada (CMC) is pleased to offer live, AI-powered simultaneous translation for this symposium with Wordly. Participants may follow the discussion in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, in real time, using their cellphone or computer (no download or account required). When the event starts, simply open the link provided in the zoom chat.

SUMMARY SCHEDULE

May 14 ◆ May 19 - 21 ◆ Schedule Outline (times showing in Atlantic ADT)

Time	Topic/Theme	Type	Title
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Thursday May 14 (ADT)

Click links below each time slot to find your local time

1:00pm – 3:00pm Find your time zone here	Pre-Symposium Workshop	Workshop	What Makes Your Co-op Different? Reverse Engineering Your Market to Find Your Edge
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Tuesday May 19 (ADT)

10:00am – 11:15am Find your time zone here	Public Awareness, Public Policy and Law	Panel	Advancing the Co-operative Message in Today’s Economic Climate	
12:00pm – 2:00pm Find your time zone here	Public Awareness, Public Policy and Law	Presentations	1) <i>From Invisible to Irresistible: Marketing the Co-operative Advantage Through a National Identity System</i>	2) <i>Spreading the Word: Media and Public Awareness Through Colorado's Co-op Networks</i>
2:30pm – 4:30pm Find your time zone here	Alignment with Co-operative Culture and Identity	Presentations & Interview Panel	1) <i>Beyond Branding: Living Co- operative Identity through Practice</i>	2) <i>Old Medicine, New Structure</i>
			3) <i>Embedding Co-operative Identity in Management Practice: The Nodos Model from Argentina</i>	4) <i>Under the Hood of Cooperative Culture</i>

Wednesday May 20 (ADT)

9:00am – 10:15am Find your time zone here	Effective Branding: Positioning, Messaging and Co-op Identity in a Modern Digital Landscape	Panel	Digital Storytelling and Strengthening Co-operative Identity in Today's Digital Landscape	
10:30am – 11:30am Find your time zone here	Effective Branding: Positioning, Messaging and Co-op Identity in a Modern Digital Landscape	Presentations	1) <i>Co-operative Branding Kit 101</i>	2) <i>The State of Social Media and the Next Steps to Update Your Co-operative's Digital Strategy</i>
12:00pm – 2:00pm Find your time zone here	Branding and Labels	Keynote + Panel	Co-operative Labelling and Brand Recognition – Strengthening Co-operative Identity	
2:30pm – 4:15pm Find your time zone here	Sustainability Reporting as Part of Branding and Telling the Co-op Story	Presentations	1) <i>From Compliance Reporting to Cooperative Purpose Construction: Identity-Led Sustainability Reporting for Cooperatives</i>	2) <i>Time for Co-operatives to Get Their Sustainability Reporting ACT in Gear!</i>
			3) <i>Measuring and Communicating Co-operative Identity: Tools from the Americas</i>	

Thursday May 21 (ADT)

9:00am-10:30am Find your time zone here	Credit Unions and Marketing	Presentations	1) <i>Standing Out in a Crowded Market: The Donore Credit Union Story</i>	2) <i>Digital Convenience, Local Loyalty, Human Connection: Modernizing Co-operative Member Value in a Small-Market Credit Union</i>
			3) <i>Between Principle and Pressure: The Challenge in Sustaining Co-operative Identity (Case of financial cooperatives/SACCOs in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)</i>	
11:00am – 12:00pm Find your time zone here	Engaging New Audiences In Co-operatives	Presentations	1) <i>Attracting New Audiences: Bringing New People to the Co-op Model</i>	2) <i>How Youth Education Maintains Co-operative Engagement Over the Long Term</i>
12:00pm-12:15pm Find your time zone here	Visibility to the Co-operative network	Showcase	Worldmap.coop Showcase with Tom Ivey	

12:30pm-1:30pm

[Find your time zone here](#)

Marketing for
Member Loyalty
and Engagement

Case Study
Presentations
& Closing

1) *Measuring and Communicating the
Cooperative Difference to Strengthen
Member Engagement*

2) *Marketing the Co-operative Advantage in
Funeral Service*

DETAILED SCHEDULE & SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Thursday May 14 

Pre-Symposium Workshop

1:00pm –
3:00pm ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Workshop:

What Makes Your Co-op Different? Reverse Engineering Your Market to Find Your Edge

Welcome: Erin Hancock, Education Manager, International Centre for Co-operative Management

Miguel Valencia, Worker-Owner, Design Action Collective

Raquel Victoria Navarro, Worker-Owner, Radiant Consulting; Communications Coordinator, U.S. Federation of Worker Coops

What makes your co-op different? In this workshop, we'll examine how companies in 3 key industries position themselves. Together, we'll study their marketing to reverse engineer who their customers are and what messaging works. Then we'll flip the lens: what does your co-op offer that competitors can't match? We'll brainstorm how to authentically communicate the co-op advantage. You'll develop a compelling value proposition that speaks directly to what your customers actually care about.

10:00am –
11:15am
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Symposium Launch

Erin Hancock, Education Manager, International Centre for Co-operative Management, Saint Mary's University

Panel: Advancing the Co-operative Message in Today's Economic Climate

Moderator: Aaliyah Nedd, Director of Government Relations, NCBA CLUSA

Chelsie Bakken, Communications and Marketing Manager, East River Electric Power Cooperative

Jaimie Miller, Vice President, Iowa Credit Union League

Amy Abbott, Co-Executive Director of Community Purchasing Alliance

Cooperatives have a unique ability to build a stronger economy by providing access, agility and affordability. This is particularly compelling in today's environment where communities and families are experiencing rising costs in every facet of life, from groceries to utility bills to housing. Whether advocating for legislation and policies that support cooperatives, communicating to members, or marketing to customers and the broader public, this message resonates. This virtual armchair dialogue with NCBA CLUSA, Iowa Credit Union League, and ROC USA will discuss how cooperators across sectors can market the cooperative advantage through the framework of access, agility, and affordability.

12:00pm –
2:00pm
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Four Presentations:

Discussion / questions following presentations

Moderator: Karen Miner, Managing Director, International Centre for Co-operative Management

1) From Invisible to Irresistible: Marketing the Co-operative Advantage Through a National Identity System

Lisa Zentner, Director of Communications, Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada

This session presents a practical case study from Canada on using a unified national co-operative marque and QR enabled marketing label to turn co-operative values into a competitive advantage. Grounded in public opinion research and sector strategy, it shows how consistent identity, point of sale visibility, and everyday touchpoints help consumers recognize, understand, and choose co-operatives. The contribution focuses on a scalable campaign and toolset rather than a logo exercise, illustrating how visibility drives

awareness, preference, and market share. Intended for co-op leaders, marketers, practitioners, and movement builders, the session blends strategic reflection with applied marketing practice.

2) Spreading the Word: Media and Public Awareness Through Colorado's Co-op Networks

Júlia Martins Rodrigues, Research Associate, University of Colorado Boulder

As Vice-Chair of Colorado's Employee Ownership Office and Associate Director of the Media Economies Design Lab at CU Boulder, I'm leading a state-wide campaign building visibility for cooperatives and community ownership models. This session explores how policy infrastructure and academia intersect to create public awareness about co-operatives, leveraging university expertise, student talent, and cross-generational collaboration for scalable communication strategies.

3) SomosCoop: Promoting Co-op Identity Through Shared Branding

Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB System)

SomosCoop unites Brazil's 4,384 cooperatives around a shared brand identity through a national campaign. Since 2018, the campaign has shifted public recognition of cooperatives from 29% to 55% (2023 survey). Today, around 1,649 co-ops have adopted the logo on their products and communications. SomosCoop is an example of a replicable model for cooperative movements worldwide. Learn more at: somos.coop.br

4) Ownership Structures Are Identity Structures: Co-operatives as Critical Institutions for Today's Economy

Jason Wiener, Founder, Jason Wiener|pc

Ownership structures are identity structures. They determine who matters, who decides, and who builds wealth versus who stays disposable. The cooperative movement's messaging problem isn't about explaining governance better. It's about naming what people already feel: exhaustion from bootstrap individualism, hunger for relationships that honor collective contribution, recognition that extraction-based ownership is hollowing out communities. This presentation positions co-ops where they belong — not as niche alternative, but as answer to an economic identity crisis facing founders, workers, and communities alike. And it makes the case that what cooperatives need most isn't better policy pathways. It's cultural resonance.

Alignment with Co-operative Culture and Identity

2:30pm-
4:30pm
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Three Presentations and an Interview Panel:

Discussion / questions following presentations

Moderator: John McNamara, Co-Executive Director, Northwest Cooperative Development Center

1) Beyond Branding: Living Co-operative Identity through Practice

Luis Camilo Oyarzún, PhD(c) Global Development Institute, University of Manchester

Co-ops are founded on shared principles and values, yet putting them into everyday practice can be challenging. Based on research with Chilean co-ops, this session explores the gap between declared co-op identity and lived culture. It introduces the PLUS+ framework, a practical tool to align values, leadership, and strategy. A mix of research and practice for co-op leaders, practitioners, and researchers.

2) Old Medicine, New Structure

Nicole Borner, Co-owner, Trillium Cooperative
Cheyenne Robinson, Co-owner, Trillium Cooperative

Trillium Cooperative, an Indigenous women-led consulting cooperative, demonstrates how co-operative identity becomes credible when governance, culture, and communication align. Grounded in the symbolism of the trillium flower, we examine how democratic ownership, equity, and solidarity function as structural authenticity. Blending reflection and practical tools, this session offers an alignment framework for practitioners and leaders seeking to strengthen co-op identity and culture.

3) Embedding Co-operative Identity in Management Practice: The Nodos Model from Argentina

Graciana Mujica, Executive Director, Fundaci3n Nodos

Co-operative identity is often expressed through branding, yet many co-operatives struggle to translate principles into everyday management. At Fundaci3n Nodos we developed a Co-operative Management Model together with co-ops in our network that embeds identity in leadership, governance, culture, and is implemented through tailored support and a cooperative university designed around real management needs.

4) Under the Hood of Cooperative Culture – Interview Panel

Christie Lam, Senior Cooperative Consultant, The ICA Group

Ally Domm (she/her), Director of Service Development and Worker-Owner, Big Duck

Hear from developers from the ICA Group, and a worker-owned brand agency it helped convert in 2021 share practical lessons on building cooperative systems, decision making, navigating disagreement, and transparency. For practitioners and worker-owners, this session will explore how these practices shaped one co-op's internal culture and influences how it communicates its brand, sharing a unique perspective into how principles meet reality.

Wednesday 20 May ◇

Effective Branding: Positioning, Messaging and Co-op Identity in A Modern Digital Landscape

9:00am –
10:15am
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Panel: Digital Storytelling and Strengthening Co-operative Identity in Today's Digital Landscape

Moderator: Tom Ivey, Community Development Manager, DotCoop

Jay-vee Marasigan Pangan, Chairperson, Youth Connect Cooperative

Teepee Gile, Co-founder, CEO and Creative Director, Red Root Artists Cooperative

Vina Vida Rempillo, Training and Enterprise Development Lead, NATCCO

Gelizabeth Dela Torre Cabuhat, Sales and Marketing Head, 1CISP

This panel brings together cooperative practitioners from the Philippines working in communications, marketing, and enterprise development. Drawing from Youth Connect Cooperative's work with young professionals and gig economy workers and global storytelling initiatives with ICA and DotCoop, panelists will share practical experiences on digital storytelling, marketing the cooperative advantage, and strengthening cooperative identity in today's digital landscape.

10:30am –
11:30am
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Two Presentations:

Discussion / questions following presentations

Moderator: Rebecca Harvey, Executive Editor, Co-operative News

1) Co-operative Branding Kit 101

Camila Tapia-Guilliams, Co-founder & Worker-Owner, Transverse Cooperative
Ellie Yanagisawa, Co-founder & Worker-Owner, Transverse Cooperative

Using principles of design and business planning tools, Co-op Branding Kit 101 will break down branding best practices for logos, voice, color palettes, typography, imagery, and other ways to express a co-op's identity. This session is ideal for those looking to create or update their branding and/or logo.

2) The State of Social Media and the Next Steps to Update Your Co-operatives' Digital Strategy

Dawn Walker, Cosocial Community Cooperative

Cooperatives face an uncertain digital landscape in 2026. Unaccountable big tech platforms and social media are no longer a fit for values-driven and democratic organizations. Recent news has put questions of who owns our data and digital sovereignty front of mind. In a practical talk I will walk through the current state of social media alternatives including the Fediverse and Bluesky, key considerations and next steps to update your cooperatives' digital strategy.

Branding and Labels

12:00pm –
2:00pm
ADT

[Find your time zone here](#)

Keynote + Panel:

Co-operative Labelling and Brand Recognition - Strengthening Co-operative Identity

Moderator: Erbin Crowell, Member of the Cooperative Identity Advisory Group of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA); Board Member of NCBA CLUSA and Executive Director of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association; Adjunct Professor with the International Centre for Co-operative Management of Saint Mary's University
Jeroen Douglas, Director General of the International Cooperative Alliance
Violetta Nafpaktiti, CEO of DotCooperation LLC
Jed Davis, VP Strategic Engagement & Sustainability, Cabot Creamery Cooperative

This session (keynote followed by a panel) explores how co-operative labelling and brand recognition can be used as strategic marketing tools to clearly differentiate co-operatives in a crowded marketplace. It examines how co-operatives communicate authenticity, protect their identity, and align brand signals with lived values to build credibility and trust with members and customers. Participants will share practical approaches for leveraging co-operative identity, shared language, and visible markers of co-operation to strengthen brand recognition, avoid value dilution, and amplify the co-operative difference.

Sustainability Reporting as Part of Branding and Telling the Co-op Story

2:30pm –
4:15pm
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Three Presentations:

Discussion / questions following all presentations

Moderator: Emi Do (she/they), Communications Specialist, Sustainability Solutions Group

1) From Compliance Reporting to Cooperative Purpose Construction: Identity-Led Sustainability Reporting for Cooperatives

Jon Olaizola Alberdi, Doctoral Researcher, Mondragon University - Business Faculty

I share practice-ready principles for contextual reporting that creates a virtuous circle between identity, purpose and sustainability performance, beyond box-ticking compliance. For cooperative leaders, ESG/communications practitioners, and researchers. Mix: reflective + research with practical takeaways.

2) Time for Co-operatives to Get Their Sustainability Reporting ACT in Gear!

Daphne Rixon, Executive Director, CEARC

Fiona Duguid, Adjunct Professor MMCCU and CEARC Research Fellow

Co-operatives are widely recognized as sustainable enterprises, yet a recent article by Corporate Knights pointed out that relatively few actually report on their sustainability performance. By reporting on their contributions to sustainable development, co-operatives can more clearly express and strengthen their co-operative identity. In this presentation, we will demonstrate how the online dashboard ACT (Accounting for Co-operative Transformation) can be used to help co-operatives report on their performance relative to both the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the co-operative principles. In addition to providing a reporting tool, ACT's real value lies in its ability to generate benchmarks that co-operatives can use to evaluate and compare their SDG performance over time and across organizations.

3) Measuring and Communicating Co-operative Identity: Tools from the Americas

Paula Arzadun, Head of Education, Training and Research, Cooperatives of the Americas, International Cooperative Alliance

This session presents practical tools from Cooperatives of the Americas to demonstrate and communicate the value of co-operatives, including the Co-operative Social Balance framework and the CoopImpact platform. It also shares insights from research initiatives carried out during the International Year of Cooperatives 2025. Aimed at practitioners, leaders, and researchers.

Thursday May 21 

Credit Unions and Marketing

9:00am –
10:30pm
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Three Presentation:

Discussion / questions following all presentations

Moderator: Erin Hancock, Education Manager, International Centre for Co-operative Management

1) Standing Out in a Crowded Market: The Donore Credit Union Story

David McAuley, CEO, Donore Credit Union, and Treasurer, Irish League of Credit Unions

As CEO of Ireland's very first credit union - Donore Credit Union which is a small mid-size credit union, how do we distinguish ourselves in a crowded market. How do we use the idea of mutuality and basic concepts of "neighbour helping neighbour" to distinguish ourselves and build an engaged membership. Donore CU, has a big presence in the Irish CU sector, due to our continued financial success, and leadership in advocating for the credit union operating principles.

2) Digital Convenience, Local Loyalty, Human Connection: Modernizing Co-operative Member Value in a Small-Market Credit Union

Blake Sandham, Manager / Growth & Member Experience, Coastal Financial Credit Union

This session explores how a small market financial co operative is blending digital convenience with relationship-based service to strengthen co operative identity and member value. Drawing on examples such as a local loyalty ecosystem, a community-focused small business storytelling campaign, and the emerging "AOFIB" model—Apply Online, Finish In Branch—the presentation highlights practical strategies for differentiating co operatives from investor-owned banks. Relevant for practitioners and leaders, this talk demonstrates how co-operative values can drive marketing, digital adoption, and member engagement in meaningful and measurable ways.

3) Between Principle and Pressure: The Challenge in Sustaining Co-operative Identity (Case of financial cooperatives/SACCOs in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

YETNAYET TEKLEWOLD GELAN, General Manager, Premier Plus Springfield Training and Consultancy plc, and Consultant at Henosis SACCO, Selam SACCO and Yehulum SACCO

Intense member demand for specific loans is reshaping SACCOs' identity, public image, and brand strategy. They're increasingly recognized solely for one dominant product—like quick approvals and fast cash disbursements—which enhances member relevance, market visibility, and competitiveness. Yet, this focus creates over-concentration risks, diverting attention from core cooperative principles: savings mobilization, diverse credit, financial education, risk management, and long-term welfare. The presentation explores effects on identity, branding, governance, and sustainability, questioning if SACCOs are morphing from member-owned financial ecosystems into mere single-product lenders.

Engaging New Audiences In Co-operatives

11:00am –
12:00pm
ADT

[Find your time zone here](#)

Two Presentation:

Discussion / questions following all presentations

Welcome: Cathy Statz, Outreach Specialist, International Centre for Co-operative Management; Cooperative Outreach Specialist, NCBA CLUSA; Communications/Special Projects, Ralph K. Morris Foundation

1) Attracting New Audiences: Bringing New People to the Co-op Model

Aasa Marshall, Director of Communications, Co-operatives First

Co-operatives First was founded in response to falling awareness about co-ops and how they can be used. They've learned some key lessons about how to reach people who could benefit from co-ops, but are not familiar with their structure and benefits. With useful, practical tips for practitioners and co-op leaders, this session will draw on lessons learned from years of helping new audiences discover the value of co-operatives.

2) How Youth Education Maintains Co-operative Engagement Over The Long Term

*Marc-Andre Pigeon, Director and Strategic Research Fellow, Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives
Stan Yu, Research and Communications Coordinator, Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives*

Co-operative youth education programs (CYEPs) have been offered across Canada for decades. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these programs produce generations of graduates who value the co-op model but there has been little research on their long-term

impact. This presentation highlights a survey on alumni, which found that they actively engage with the co-op sector in their professional and personal lives and offers lessons on how we can harness this engagement to promote a wider co-op culture.

Visibility to the Co-operative Network

12:00pm –
12:15pm
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Showcase:

Worldmap.coop Showcase

Tom Ivey, Community Development Manager, DotCoop

Since the end of 2024, the Cooperative World Map has evolved from an early demo proof-of-concept into a powerful global resource, now featuring more than 80,000 cooperative organisations alongside a growing set of tools and capabilities. This short session will explore the Map's development journey, key milestones, and plans for the year ahead. It will also examine how the cooperative movement is using the platform, highlight in-demand features, and share the roadmap for transforming a rich dataset into a dynamic tool that strengthens cooperative identity, visibility, and collaboration worldwide. Participants will be invited to share ideas, offer feedback, and contribute to shaping the future of this collective project.

Marketing for Member Loyalty and Engagement

12:30pm –
1:30pm
ADT

[Find your time
zone here](#)

Two Case Studies & Closing:

Discussion / questions following all presentations, plus closing ceremony

Moderator: Tom Ivey, Community Development Manager, DotCoop

1) Measuring and Communicating the Cooperative Difference to Strengthen Member Engagement

Susanna Collins, Principal Consultant/Founding Member at GIA Consulting Co-op

Cooperatives create unique community value—but demonstrating that impact clearly is essential in today's competitive landscape. This session examines how Central Co-op in Seattle used local economic analysis to quantify its community contribution and strengthen its marketing and advocacy efforts. By turning data into compelling stories, the co-op boosted member loyalty, increased engagement, and enhanced its public profile while building relationships with policymakers.

Participants will learn how measuring impact supports clearer messaging, fosters psychological ownership among members, and shapes public perception. This case study offers practical strategies for translating cooperative values into measurable outcomes to inform communications, advocacy, and long-term planning.

2) Marketing the co-operative advantage in funeral service

Caroline Cloutier, Marketing and Communication Director at the Coopérative Funéraire du Grand Montréal

This presentation explores how funeral cooperatives can highlight their distinctive advantage in a market dominated by private players. Through concrete examples, it demonstrates how cooperative values can become powerful drivers of marketing and member loyalty. By shifting from service delivery to meaningful support and caring, cooperatives can strengthen trust, engagement, and a sense of belonging. The presentation will offer practical strategies to communicate the cooperative advantage, mobilize members, and position the cooperative as a humane, transparent and sustainable alternative in the funeral services sector.

Closing

Erin Hancock, Education Manager, International Centre for Co-operative Management, Saint Mary's University

Speaker Biographies (in order of events) ◇ 40+ Speakers from 11 Countries

Thursday May 14 ◇

Name / Organisation	Bio
<p>Miguel Valencia (They / them) Worker-Owner, Design Action Collective Board Member, Network of Bay Area Worker Co-ops</p>	<p>Miguel's technical expertise in WordPress development, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and digital marketing serves one purpose: helping liberation-focused organizations effectively communicate their vision for a world where all people have access to housing, healthcare, food, and power.</p>
<p>Raquel Victoria Navarro Worker-Owner, Radiant Consulting Communications Coordinator, U.S. Federation of Worker Coops</p>	<p>Raquel works with business owners and small marketing teams to advertise their niche through powerful storytelling and other creative or unconventional tactics to sustainably reach their target clientele.</p>

Tuesday May 19 ◇

Name / Organisation	Bio
<p>Erin Hancock (She/her) Education Manager, International Centre for Co-operative Management</p>	<p>Erin Hancock (she/her) is Program Manager for Education at ICCM, joining in 2016 after roles with Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada and the Measuring the Co-operative Difference Research Network. She also serves as Vice Chair of iNova Credit Union and chairs its Co-operative Social Responsibility Committee. Erin received the 2022 Outstanding Contribution to Co-operative Education and Training Award and earned the ICUDE designation in 2023. She has held leadership roles across numerous co-operative boards and organizations. Erin holds an MPhil in Public Policy with a research focus on co-operative development, a BPhil in Leadership Studies, and certificates in university teaching, co-operative governance, and co-operative management.</p>
<p>Aaliyah Nedd, Moderator Director of Government Relations, NCBA CLUSA</p>	<p>Aaliyah Nedd serves as Director of Government Relations for the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA CLUSA). In this role, she leads NCBA's federal, state, and local outreach and advocacy work to develop, advance and promote cooperative enterprise. Prior to joining NCBA CLUSA, Aaliyah worked on a variety of policy issues at the National Association of Counties (NACo). Most recently she served as the Associate Legislative Director for Agriculture/Rural Affairs and Immigration. Aaliyah holds degrees in International Studies and Russian and is a graduate of the University of Florida.</p>

Chelsie Bakken

Communications and Marketing Manager,
East River Electric Power Cooperative

Chelsie Bakken is the Communications and Marketing Manager at East River Electric Power Cooperative, a power supply co-op that delivers wholesale power to 24 rural electric distribution cooperatives and one municipally-owned electric system in eastern South Dakota and Western Minnesota. Prior to joining East River Electric, she served as the Public Information Officer for the City of Brookings, SD, taught mass communication, and design courses at South Dakota State University and has over 20 years of experience in marketing, advertising, and public relations.

Jaimie Miller

Vice President, Iowa Credit Union League

Jaimie Miller, see: <https://www.iowacreditunions.com/about-icul/icul-team>

Amy Abbott

Co-Executive Director of Community
Purchasing Alliance

Amy Abbott, see: <https://www.cpa.coop/amy>

Lisa Zentner

Director of Communications, Co-
operatives and Mutuels Canada

Lisa Zentner is the Communications Director of Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada (CMC). A LEED Green Associate and bilingual brand strategist, she has led marketing, global rebrands, and campaigns for multinational nonprofits, advocacy groups, and corporations. Lisa translates complex goals into stakeholder-centred narratives, drives business growth, and mobilizes support by repositioning brands and launching initiatives aligned with market opportunity and mission.

Júlia Martins Rodrigues

Research Associate, University of
Colorado Boulder

Júlia Martins Rodrigues, PhD, serves as Vice-Chair of the governor-appointed Commission at the Colorado Employee Ownership Office, affiliated with the Office of Economic Development and International Trade. Her areas of expertise include cooperative law, multi-stakeholder cooperative networks, shared ownership, and collective governance. She is a Research Associate at the University of Colorado Boulder, serving as the Associate Director of the Media Economies Design Lab.

Jason Wiener (He/him)


Founder, Jason Wiener|pc

Jason is the Founder and Partner of the boutique law and business consulting practice Jason Wiener|p.c., and co-founder of 'Colorado Cooperative Developers'. Jason specializes in cooperative law, shared ownership models, regenerative capital and financing strategies, sustainable economies law, and worker-ownership. Jason has advised on more than two dozen worker-cooperative conversions, several multi-stakeholder ownership conversions, and more than a dozen platform cooperatives.

Luis Camilo Oyarzún (He/him)

Luis Camilo Oyarzún is an industrial engineer and PhD candidate at the Global Development Institute, University of Manchester. He works on co-operatives, sustainability, and organisational development. He

PhD(c) Global Development Institute, University of Manchester	has over 10 years of experience in branding, marketing, and communication, and more than 5 years working with co-ops as a consultant in Chile.
Nicole Borner Co-owner, Trillium Cooperative	Trillium Cooperative is a women-owned, Indigenous-led consulting cooperative serving rural and Indigenous communities. Inspired by the trillium flower-three petals sharing a single center, we embody solidarity, equity, and democratic governance. Our cooperative structure reflects the values we teach, honoring lived experience, cultural knowledge, and community strengths while supporting sustainable development, education, and the growth of cooperatives. Bios website: https://www.trilliumcoop.com/about
Cheyenne Robinson Co-owner, Trillium Cooperative	
Graciana Mujica Executive Director, Fundaci3n Nodos	Graciana Mujica is Executive Director of Fundaci3n Nodos, created by organizations within one of the largest co-operative business groups in Argentina. She leads the development of the Nodos Management Model for Co-operatives, a Cooperative University and educational Programs, working with a core team and a network of facilitators across 120 co-operatives connecting nearly 50,000 farmers, strengthening co-operative identity, leadership and management while unlocking their full potential.
Christie Lam (they/she) Senior Cooperative Consultant, The ICA Group	Christie is a member of ICA's Cross Programs Team, tasked with creating worker owned businesses and sustaining the field of employee ownership and democratic workplaces. The ICA Group is the oldest national nonprofit dedicated to worker cooperatives. They joined ICA with a background in strategic and business consulting for nonprofits and for-purpose consumer brands. Some of the folks they have worked with include Green Worker Cooperatives, PODER Emma, ProPublica, PBS/WNET Group, and Pentagonam.
Ally Dommu (she/her) Director of Service Development and Worker-Owner, Big Duck	Ally Dommu (she/her) is Director of Service Development and Worker-Owner at Big Duck, a worker-owned cooperative that builds brands and campaigns, creates communications plans, and offers training for nonprofits. With nearly 20 years of nonprofit experience, Ally brings expertise in research, training, facilitation, and brand and communications strategy. She serves as Secretary on Big Duck's board of directors. Previously, Ally led communications and fundraising at Sanctuary for Families, supporting survivors of gender-based violence. She holds a Master's in Nonprofit Management from The New School and a degree from Emory University. Ally lives in New York's Hudson Valley with her family.

Wednesday May 20 	
Name / Organisation	Bio
Jay-vee Marasigan Pangan (He/him) Chairperson, Youth Connect Cooperative	Jay-vee Marasigan Pangan is a multimedia journalist and communications strategist managing ICA's social media. YCC chair. See linkedin.com/in/vpangan/

<p>Teepee Gile Co-founder, CEO and Creative Director, Red Root Artists Cooperative</p>	<p>Teepee Gile is co-founder, CEO, and creative director of Red Root Artists Cooperative, the Philippines' first artists cooperative</p>
<p>Vina Vida Rempillo Training and Enterprise Development Lead, NATCCO</p>	<p>Vina Vida Rempillo leads training and enterprise development at NATCCO. See linkedin.com/in/vrrempillo/</p>
<p>Gelizabeth Dela Torre Cabuhat Sales and Marketing Head, 1CISP</p>	<p>Gelizabeth Dela Torre Cabuhat heads Sales and Marketing at 1CISP. See linkedin.com/in/gelizabethcabuhat/</p>
<p>Camila Tapia-Guilliams (They/them) Co-founder & Worker-Owner, Transverse Cooperative Training & Education Coordinator, USFWC</p>	<p>See https://transversecooperative.com/our-workers/ and click on the "view bio" button on both Camila and Ellie's profiles.</p>
<p>Ellie Yanagisawa (They/them) Co-founder & Worker-Owner, Transverse Cooperative</p>	
<p>Erbin Crowell Member, Cooperative Identity Advisory Group of the International Cooperative Alliance, and Board Member, NCBA CLUSA Executive Director, Neighboring Food Co- op Association Adjunct Professor, International Centre for Co-operative Management, Saint Mary's University</p>	<p>Erbin Crowell has served as Executive Director of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) since 2010. He brings more than 25 years of experience in co-operative enterprise, Fair Trade, and sustainable food systems, including work with Equal Exchange (USA), the Cooperative Fund of the Northeast, the Cooperative Development Institute, and the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops, and as a consultant with organizations such as the Federation of Southern Cooperatives / Land Assistance Fund. Erbin also serves on the Boards of the Co-operative Management Education Co-operative (CMEC), DotCoop LLC, and the New England Farmers Union. Crowell received his BAs in Anthropology and the Visual Arts from Brown University and his Master of Management, Co-operatives & Credit Unions (MMCCU) from Saint Mary's University.</p>
<p>Jeroen Douglas</p>	<p>A Dutch national, Mr. Jeroen Douglas joined the ICA as its Director General in 2024. Previously, he served as the Executive Director of Solidaridad, an international civil society organisation, from 2019 to 2023,</p>

Director General, International
Cooperative Alliance

which he joined in 1992 as a Campaign Officer. In 2009, he became Director for Solidaridad in Latin America and managed finance, governance, partnerships, advocacy and fundraising in the region. In 2016, he was appointed Solidaridad's Strategy Director and drove the development of the network's 2016-2020 strategy, being responsible for network-wide policy and related programme implementations. He has a background in theology and cultural anthropology.

Violetta Nafpaktiti

CEO of DotCooperation LLC

Violetta is the CEO of DotCooperation LLC (DotCoop), the entity managing assets for the promotion, development and protection of cooperatives worldwide: the .COOP domain and the COOP Marque. Violetta has been actively involved with .coop since its inception, accumulating a wealth of experience in the domain name and internet industry. She is an experienced presenter and has travelled around the world to events organised by the international cooperative movement, speaking on subjects from cooperative identity, the cooperative difference, digital tech and innovation, the advancing progress of AI as well as the potential and management of data. Originally from Greece, She has been living in the United Kingdom since the mid-1990s.

Jed Davis

Director of Sustainability Cabot Creamery
Co-operative

Jed Davis is on the leadership team of the Agri-Mark dairy cooperative in the Northeast U.S., a certified B Corp since 2012 and known for its Cabot®, McCadam®, and Agri-Mark® brands of award-winning dairy products. He has been actively engaged with cooperatives his entire life, of which the first three decades were spent on his family's six-generation dairy, fruit, and vegetable farm in New England. Working at Cabot Creamery since 1991 in a variety of positions, in 2008, Jed was named as the co-op's first, full-time sustainability lead. His efforts center on helping the co-op and its brands aspire to an understanding of "Sustainability" as "living within our means and ensuring the means to live". He holds an MBA from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, from where he also received his Bachelor of Arts degree.

Jon Olaizola Alberdi

Doctoral Researcher, Mondragon
University - Business Faculty

Jon Olaizola-Alberdi from MONDRAGON is a researcher and practitioner working at the intersection of sustainability reporting, cooperative identity, and social economy governance. His work examines how reporting frameworks are interpreted in practice and how identity-led, contextual approaches can turn disclosure into a learning process that strengthens purpose, accountability, and measurable sustainability performance. He also contributes to academic debates on impact measurement.

Daphne Rixon

Executive Director, CEARC

Daphne Rixon, PhD, CPA is the Executive Director, CEARC and an accounting professor, Saint Mary's University. Her research focuses on accounting and reporting by co-operatives. She has over 50 peer reviewed publications.

Fiona Duguid

Adjunct Professor MMCCU and CEARC
Research Fellow

Fiona Duguid, PhD conducts research focusing on co-operatives, social economy, sustainability and community economic development, is an instructor in the SMU MMCCU program, as well as the MBA program (CED) at Cape Breton University.

Paula Arzadun

Head of Education, Training and Research,
Cooperatives of the Americas,
International Cooperative Alliance

Paula Arzadun is Head of Education, Training and Research at Cooperatives of the Americas, the regional office of the International Cooperative Alliance. She is an Economist (University of Buenos Aires, Argentina) and holds a PhD in Business Science and an MBA in Cooperativism and Social Economy from Mondragon University (Spain)

Thursday May 21 

Name / Organisation**Bio****David McAuley**

CEO, Donore Credit Union
Treasurer, Irish League of Credit Unions

I am a qualified accountant with almost 20 years' experience as a senior manager in the Irish CU sector. I have attained a Masters in Cooperative And Social Enterprises Studies from University College Cork. This May I was elected Treasurer of the Irish League of Credit Unions. I have been at the forefront of delivering a new structured collaboration of small mid-size credit unions. I am CEO of Donore CU since 2016, making it a benchmark for other CUs

Blake Sandham (He/him)

Manager, Growth & Member Experience,
Coastal Financial Credit Union

Blake Sandham leads Growth and Member Experience at Coastal Financial Credit Union, where he spearheads marketing, loyalty, community engagement, deposit and digital services, wealth management, and strategic partnerships. His work focuses on shaping an integrated growth strategy that blends digital convenience with deeply relational member service anchored in co operative values. Passionate about demonstrating the co operative difference in practical, modern ways, he brings a practitioner's perspective grounded in real member behaviour and small market insights.

YETNAYET TEKLEWOLD GELAN

General Manager of Premier Plus
Springfield Training and Consultancy plc
Consultant at Henosis SACCO, Selam
SACCO and Yehulum SACCO

My name is Yetnayet Teklewold. I am the founder and managing director of Premier Plus Springfield Training and Consultancy. I am currently consulting three SACCOS in Addis Ababa. Henosis SACCO, Selam SACCO and Yehulum SACCO. I have served AWACH SACCO in different positions for more than seven years. I have a BA and MA degrees in Political Science and International relations. I am also an academician. I served as a lecturer for many years and academic manager for one of the NCUK study center in Ethiopia.

Aasa Marshall (She/her)

Director of Communications, Co-
operatives First

Aasa Marshall is the Director of Communications at Co-operatives First. With a background in print journalism and a Master of Public Policy, she has spent a lot of time thinking about how to get complex information across in simple, accessible ways. Her work focuses on getting the word out about how great co-ops are, and she created the 'Communications for Co-ops' workshop for Co-operatives First clients to help them create comms strategies for their co-operatives.

Marc-Andre Pigeon (He/him)

Director and Strategic Research Fellow,
Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-
operatives

Marc-Andre Pigeon is the Director and Strategic Research Fellow, Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives; and Stan Yu is the Research and Communications Coordinator, Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives (CCSC). The CCSC is an interdisciplinary research and teaching centre that provides practitioners and policymakers with information and conceptual tools to understand co-operatives and to develop them as solutions to the complex challenges facing communities worldwide.

Stan Yu (He/him)

Doctoral Researcher, Mondragon
University - Business Faculty

Tom Ivey

Community Development Manager,
DotCoop

Tom has been an active member of the global cooperative community for over a decade, joining DotCoop in 2016. During this time, he has taken on a range of roles and now serves as a public advocate for cooperative identity, leading webinars, workshops, and events around the world. He has also contributed to key global initiatives that support the cooperative movement, including stories.coop and worldmap.coop. Tom is a strong advocate for the cooperative business model and is committed to advancing wider recognition of its role in creating decent, sustainable work worldwide.

Susanna Collins

Principal Consultant/Founding Member at
GIA Consulting Co-op

Susanna Collins (MMCCU) is a consultant based in British Columbia, specializing in member engagement and strategic planning for co-operatives and other member-based organizations. She holds a Master of Management in Co-operatives and Credit Unions from Saint Mary's University (Halifax), and brings over 25 years of experience in marketing, communications, and organizational development. Susanna serves on the board of the BC Co-op Association, CMEC and is a founding member of GIA Consulting Co-op.

Caroline Cloutier

Marketing and Communication Director at
the Coopérative funéraire du Grand
Montréal

Caroline Cloutier is a seasoned manager and communications professional in the cooperative funeral sector, with over 25 years of experience in Quebec. Since 2010, she has served as Director of Marketing and Communications at the Coopérative funéraire du Grand Montréal, where she leverages her strategic vision, expertise in corporate communications, and leadership to support the organization's growth and visibility.

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- CanadaDE Credit Union Leadership Program, September 13-18, 2026. Halifax, NS, Canada. [More here.](#)
- Transformative Co-operative Leadership Masterclass, October 26-30, 2026. Halifax, NS, Canada. [More here.](#)
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