

Why is Co-operative Education Important?

Co-operative education is key to the success of any co-operative organization – and to the long-term success of the co-operative movement. A **co-operative's staff, board and members** that understand the values, principles and structure that their organization is built upon and operates, leads to a greater overall sense of connection, ownership and engagement with the co-operative and the community in which it exists.

A **public** that is aware of what co-operatives are, the opportunities they provide and the values inherent in the business model, is more likely to support the co-operatives in their communities. This includes not only the people who reside in those communities and purchase the goods and services offered by a co-operative, but also Government. An informed Government that is aware of the benefits of co-operative business, is more likely to support the sector with the right policies and legislation that would enable co-operatives to develop and thrive in today's economic climate.

Engaging and educating our **youth** on the co-operative values and business model opens many doors for them personally and professionally, while also benefiting the greater co-operative movement. Every day brings with it new opportunities for youth to learn and develop their skills and their understanding of the world around them. What better time is there to educate them on the co-operative values and principles and a different way of living and doing business? Youth that are aware of and understand co-operatives are more likely to engage in them throughout their lives and in varying capacities – and help spread the word on the benefits of co-operation!