

# The Co-operative Difference

## Business Model Basics



### Purpose

Co-ops earn revenue; provide products or services; benefit their owners/members; fill needs in their community.



### Ownership

Co-ops are owned by the people or enterprises that use the business; this owner group may be the customers, employees, service providers, etc.



### Tax Status

Co-operatives are subject to corporate tax, unless non-profit.



### Liability

In co-operative corporations, liability is limited to investment.



### Distribution of Profit

In a co-operative, profit is distributed to members/owners based on how much they use the business — not how much they've invested in it.



### Decision-making

All members/owners of a co-operative have one decision-making vote; co-ops are governed by a board of directors elected by and from the members/owners.

# Co-operative Facts and Figures

*Co-operatives  
in Canada!*

6,500+  
CO-OPS IN  
CANADA

195,000  
CO-OP  
EMPLOYEES

21 MILLION  
CO-OP  
MEMBERS

78 BILLION  
IN TOTAL  
REVENUE

Source: Ontario Economic Impact Report, 2019



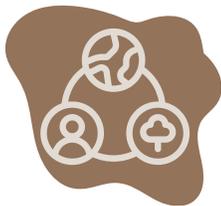
## Co-operatives are Problem Solvers.

Co-ops are social enterprise ventures that offer social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits to the communities they operate in. Exploring co-operatives may encourage students to think critically about the impact of business decisions on communities and the environment.



## Co-operatives and Entrepreneurship

Young entrepreneurs can leverage their collective power using this democratic and equitable model. Co-operative businesses require collaboration, a creative mindset, and teamwork skills. Introducing the co-op model can foster a more inclusive and open-minded approach to entrepreneurship.



## Co-operatives and Social Responsibility

Co-operatives often emphasize social responsibility, community development, and ethical business practices. Teaching about co-operatives can instill a sense of social responsibility in students.



## The Co-operative Story

We live in a world divided by competition, but what would it be like if we thought about co-operating? Take a look back at what the pioneers of Rochdale, England thought, and the birth of the modern co-operative movement.



## Curriculum Connections

The co-operative business model is among the four recognized business types in Canada and is included in the Grade 9–12 Ontario curriculum. Teachers can integrate co-operative content into Business Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities, and Canadian and World Studies courses. (Scan QR code for more information on curriculum links.)

WWW.COOPERATIVEMINDS.CA  
WWW.ONTARIO.COOP