

co-operatives first

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# Good Governance in Practice

## Examples from the Co-operative Sector



## A bit about us

- Who we are
- What we do
- Why we do what we do
- How what we do can benefit communities



# Overview

- What is governance? Why co-ops?
- A model for good governance
- Governance in Practice
  - Maple Creek Co-op
  - Old Crow Co-op
  - Saskatchewan First Nations Technical Services Co-op



A group of people are gathered around a wooden table in a meeting. Several hands are visible, some pointing at documents or charts spread across the table. A silver coffee cup with a black handle is in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The background is blurred, showing more people and office equipment. The word "Governance" is overlaid in white text in the center of the image.

# Governance



## What is governance

- Steering a ship
- “Who gets to decide what”
  - Relationships
  - Trust
  - Authority
  - Incentives





# Co-operative Governance



## Co-op governance

- AGMs
- Boards
- One member, one vote
- Patronage dividends




## Co-op governance

- Importance of members
- Elections/authority
- Loyalty/Trust
  
- Individual versus collective





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# A model for good governance



## Good Governance

- Managing strategic interdependencies
- Developing the 'right' view of the future
- Establishing and maintaining legitimacy



## Organizational Policy

- Formalized decision-making
- Rules for the organization
- Structure for operations
  
- Contingent on legitimacy



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# Strategic Interdependencies



## Organizational Policy

- Clearly define roles
- Member Onboarding
- Training
- Oversight



# Financial Management During Crisis

- Maple Creek Co-op
- Reliance on member support
- Large equity drive and pay cuts
- Co-op identity



A group of people are gathered around a wooden table, looking at documents. One person is pointing at a document with a pen. A metal mug is in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an office or meeting room.

# A View to the Future



## Organizational Policy

- Effective communication
- Organizational listening
- Meaningful action
- Ongoing reporting





## View of the Future

- Old Crow Consumers' Co-op
- Importance of wealth retention
- Change consumer behaviours
- Listen to members and implement important changes



A group of people are gathered around a wooden table in a meeting. Several hands are visible, some pointing at documents or a laptop screen. A silver coffee mug is in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The word "Legitimacy" is overlaid in white text. In the bottom right corner, there is a blue square with a white circular logo containing a stylized '@' symbol.

# Legitimacy



## Organizational Policy


- Participation
- Creating/following rules
- Recognition
- Adaptation



## Legitimacy

- Saskatchewan First Nation Technical Services Co-op
- Bringing nations and tribal councils together
- Need for representation
- Alternative election policy



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# A model for good governance



## Good Governance

- Strategic Interdependencies
- A View to the Future
- Legitimacy
  
- Learn more with the Governance in Co-operatives online course!



## Sources

Jason Heit, Murray Fulton, and Brett Fairbairn (2014)  
“Autonomy and Identity: Constraints and Possibilities in Western Canada’s Co-operative Retailing System” in Brett Fairbairn and Nora Russel (eds.) *Co-operative Canada: Empowering Communities and Sustainable Businesses*: UBC Press.

Brett Fairbairn, Murray Fulton, and Dionne Pohler (2015)  
“Governance as a Determinant of Success and Failure: What Other Co-ops can Learn from Co-op Atlantic.” Centre for the Study of Co-operatives.



## Thank you! Questions?

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Governance in Co-operatives Online Course:

<https://www.canvas.net/browse/saskatchewan/courses/governance-in-cooperatives>

Paper by Fulton, Fairbairn, and Pohler:

[http://www.icdc.coop/sites/default/files/co-op\\_atlantic\\_final.pdf](http://www.icdc.coop/sites/default/files/co-op_atlantic_final.pdf)

Co-op Creator Resource Website: [coopcreator.ca](http://coopcreator.ca)

Co-operatives First Website: [cooperativesfirst.com](http://cooperativesfirst.com)

