

Table of contents

Key messages

This study provides a brief look into three co-operatives that are strongly integrated into their communities located in Canada's far North. Each co-operative provides multiple services for their communities to meet their community's needs. The integration of the co-operative into the community means that in order to be effective at managing, directing and working for the co-operative you need to understand the community the co-operative serves. This study found that:

- 1) There is a link between the community and the co-operative that needs to be encouraged and developed to keep the economic activity of the community in the community.
- 2) Skills training to increase capacity of community members to better provide for the co-operative's growing need for business acumen needs to be developed and;
- 3) Skills training needs to include a cultural sensitivity components to ease transitional issues when new individuals wish to work for the community co-operative. As the co-operative is a key component of the community it is important for those working for the co-operative to understand the community.

business practices to improve their community's economic status that need to be incorporated into current post-secondary business curriculum. Sharing the existing practices and synthesizing the information into user-friendly case studies and videos will assist Indigenous communities in communicating their business practices to future Indigenous business leaders. The results from this study, including videos and case studies, have been incorporated into five new business courses at the University of Winnipeg as part of the Co-operative Enterprise program. In addition, co-operative advocacy groups such as Co-operatives First have incorporated the videos produced by this project into their social media, websites and promotional materials to help develop Indigenous co-operatives in rural and remote communities across Western Canada.

The strengths of the

Context – the issue

There is a growing population of Indigenous youth preparing for postsecondary education (Assembly of First Nations Education, 2012; Macdonald & Wilson, 2013). Business education is one of the highest enrollment areas in Canadian Universities, but the information on Indigenous business practices are scatter across disciplines (Klinga & Canadian Career Development, 2013; Statistics-Canada, 2014). In a recent collection of essays by Brown, Tulk, and Doucette (2016) the consolidation o

Approach – methodology

Arctic Co-

Based on the initial analysis of the first two interviews tentative categories were developed. In line with Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, and Colemand (2000) method this initial category identification of the co-operatives based on the responses undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data analysis process and continually feeds back into identification of the category. Interviewee's responses were identified with a category and responses from the remaining thirteen interviewees were then placed into the identified categories. By categorizing responses from each interviewee into categories we are able to reduce the complexity of the overall responses by the interviewees and organize the responses based on the conceptual nature of the response (Dey, 1993).

Results - outcomes of the research synthesis and how they support the conclusions

Old Crow - Vuntut G'witchin First Nations

Old Crow, Yukon Territory is an isolated community located on the banks of the Porcupine and Crow Rivers just above the Arctic Circle within an area known as Old Crow Flats. The community, the river, the mountain and surrounding area of Old Crow was named in honour of Chief Deetru `K`avihdik whose name means "Crow May I Walk" who died in 1870's.

The community of Old Crow, is a small community of approximately 221 Vuntut G'witchin. The average age of the residents of Old Crow is 39.6 years with a median age of 38.7, which makes this community the oldest of the communities in this project. When discussing language only 215 individuals completed the 2016 census outlining the majority of individuals, 210 in the community, as speaking English with 10 indicating they speak both French and English. The mother tongue for the community members is mostly English, 170 individuals, followed by G'witchin at 30 and 5 individuals indicated that French was their mother tongue. At home 200 individuals indicated that English was the language most often spoken followed by G'witchin with 10 individuals and finally 5 individual indicated French was the language of the home (Statistics-Canada, 2016).

The community sits within a periglacial environment, which means Old Crow has a cold climate and the land is frequently subjected to freezing and thawing cycles. Old Crow experiences annual temperature average daily highs of 20.2 °C (68.4 °F) in July and average daily lows of -33.5 °C (-28.3 °F) in January.

Being located above the Arctic Circle there are days in the summer when Old Crow sees the midnight sun, also known as the polar day. Typically, between May 5th and August 8th the sun will be shining on Old Crow at midnight local time and that is why it is called the midnight sun. During the winter, between December 14th and December 29th, the sun will hide from Old Crow during what is known as the polar night.

As the most northern community in all of the Yukon Territory, Old Crow does bring unique challenges and opportunities for its residents. For example, Old Crow cannot be accessed by road making transportation of goods and services difficult and costly. The

Vuntut G'witchin First Nations community, however, took this transportation difficulty and made it into an opportunity by investing in the local airline:

"This initiative is unique, just as the relationship between Air North and the Yukon is unique," said Board Director Greg Charlie, who is also a member of the Vuntut G'witchin First Nation (VGFN), which owns a 49 percent stake in the airline. "It is rare to find a bond between a business and a community as strong as the one our airline shares with Yukoners. We don't take that

from leaving the community. In addition, the leadership of the community felt by working together within the federated co-operative structure they could lower the prices on goods and services provided to the community:

“We put our buying power with one store together with 32 other stores across the north and Canada.... We can get reduce costs on groceries and our produce has never been greener” (Fleet, 2017).

The establishment of the co-

locals. they also have housing out there. Many different things in the different community they sponsor. That they offer. They try to make available. They try to make the community better” (Nyhof, 2017).

While the co-operative was seen as giving back to the community the discussion on human resourcing issues provided information on the need to understand cultural differences within the community,

“There are many culture differences that you must adjust to. Some are easy

While in Ulukhaktok this project was able to interview five individuals associated with the co-operative producing 91 video clips and a total of 26.4 GB of HD film. The survey was provided to the community through Facebook and in the co-op retail store with 13 individuals completing the survey for a participation rate of 5.0%.

The co-operative in Ulu was founded in 1961 making it one of the oldest co-operatives in the study (Arctic-Co-operatives-Ltd, 2007b)

“The decisions that you make can impact the co-op or the community. Either good or bad. Your voice can be heard and you can make an impact on the co-op and your community” (Kaodloale, 2017).

The information gathered in Ulukhaktok, including videos and survey results, will form the basis for human resource training and educational case studies and videos. These outputs from this project will be utilized by Arctic Co-operatives Limited as well as advocacy agencies for co-operatives and the University of Winnipeg for the Co-operative Enterprise program within the Bachelor of Business Administration Degree.

State of Knowledge – identify knowledge strengths and knowledge gaps

The strengths of the knowledge synthesized by this project include the broad scope of participants involved in both the interviews and surveys. Managers, Directors, Staff, and Community Members participated in video interviews discussing the role of the co-operative in the community. As there are few, up-to-date videos available that include Indigenous participants as key informants this project fills a gap in knowledge that exists in Indigenous business studies. The videos produced by this project will present Indigenous business leaders discussing their role in a viable business that Indigenous business students can identify with.

The videos produced by project are HD quality videos and can be utilized in multiple formats. Short 30 second to 1 minute films can be produced for use on social media sites by co-operative advocacy agencies, Arctic Co-operatives Limited, and the community co-operative themselves. Longer 3-5 minute videos can be produced for educational case studies and a longer 30-minute documentary style video can be produced identifying the unique characteristics of Inuit and Vuntut G’witchin First Nation community co-operatives.

The survey component of this research was focused on human resource skill development and the role co-operatives play in the community. The information from these surveys will provide a basis for understanding the current skill training needs for these communities and co-operatives. In addition, a better understanding of the role co-operatives play within an Inuit and First Nations community will help build cultural sensitivity in hiring practices for co-operatives. The unique challenges of boosting a community’s skill capacity has been addressed through immigration from outside the community. The skilled individuals being brought to the community can find it

The gaps in knowledge that this project did not have the opportunity to investigate include the community side of the co-operative community relationship. The broader

Translating the case studies and dubbing the videos into the French language will allow for the dissemination of the case studies to Northern Quebec communities. Dr. Berge and Mr. Penner have developed a strong network in Northern Quebec having participated in the 2016 Model Arctic Council and the Arctic Science Summit. Mr. Penner has been an active researcher in Northern Quebec working with the Cree Nation Government. The Cree Nation will benefit from the outcomes of this project as they face similar challenges of isolation and a lack of culturally specific Indigenous business resources.

Business Educators will be another of the audiences that will benefit from the knowledge synthesized by this project. The information synthesized from this project will inform pedagogy of education in business. The development of case studies on Indigenous business practices will be disseminated through journal publications such as the Journal of Educational Research, Sociology of Education, and Studies in Higher Education. A ready audience exists within the University of Winnipeg as a number of departments are looking for Indigenous content for their courses to satisfy the University's Indigenous course requirement for graduation. Indigenous high school educators are seeking relevant business content that their students can relate to. This project will develop and disseminate youth focused videos that can be utilized for educating high school students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, on the opportunities and challenges of living in rural and remote Northern Canadian communities.

Not only will business students be introduced to the case studies and videos in classroom settings, they will gain access to this information via website and social media posts. The video stories collected during this project will be edited for multiple formats on social media, documentaries, distance education, and in-class presentations. By developing the videos into multiple formats, we can ensure that a broad audience will gain access to the information from this project.

Conferences will also play a role in disseminating the information to business educators. Dr. Berge has presented at over two-dozen conferences such as the World Rural Sociology Conference, the Joint Conference of the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation (CASC) and the Association of Cooperative Educators (ACE) and Gathering Circles: Indigenous Food Co-ops: Rising Up Conference. The results from this project are timely as CASC is developing a national strategy for post-secondary education in business that would benefit from the outcomes of this project. The information captured on video and within the case study outcomes of this project can be utilized across Canada to inform business researchers and educators of the unique characteristics of culture and place that inform Indigenous business 0.2 (ha) 0.2 (l) 0.2 (l) 0.2 (eo(c) 0.2 (c)

national and international graduate students to the Indigenous business knowledge collected through this project. Mr. Penner is a fluent French speaker and will work with a video dubbing professional to translate business documentation and dub videos into both official languages to allow for the broadest dissemination of the outcomes across Canada, including the Cree Nation in Northern Quebec.

To further disseminate the information gathered from this project the videos will be edited to produce documentary style presentations for the general public. The University of Winnipeg's Campus Academic Technologies/Media Services has extensive experience in documentary film editing and has agreed to work with our team to produce high quality documentaries. These documentaries will be presented at film festivals such as the University of Winnipeg Film Fest, Canadian Independent Film Festival, and the International Film Festival of Popular Science and Culture. Presenting the documentaries at these film festivals will increase the exposure of Canadians to the communities, business and Indigenous business leaders. The University of Winnipeg Film Festival will present current Indigenous students with a community leadership model they can directly associate with. By popularizing the stories from these Indigenous communities more Canadians will develop an understanding of Indigenous businesses and communities.

Conclusion

The Vuntut G'witchin First Nations community of Old Crow adopted the co-operative for their community as a means to manage their economic sustainability. Funds moving out of the community made it difficult for the community to plan for its future and provide quality goods and services for their residents. Much like the partnership with Air North Airline, the partnership with Arctic Co-operatives Limited and the Vuntut G'witchin First Nation looks to build a community rather than take from the community. The ability of the co-operative model to provide democratic empowerment to the membership allows communities to determine where and how funds will be spent to improve their communities for future generations.

The community of Naujaat, Nunavut has also developed a strong link between community and the co-operative. Members of the co-operative leadership also work as leaders in the local government. The management, directors and staff of the co-operative see the role of the co-operative as one of providing for the community. That being said, it is noted by the management that there are cultural sensitivities that need to be understood to function effectively in the co-operative and the community. The educational needs for co-operative members and leaders could benefit from training products that incorporate cultural sensitivity. As the community and the co-operative are inextricably linked it is not reasonable to work in the one without understanding the other.

Much like Naujaat, Ulu presents a picture of a community focused firm that offers a multitude of services for the community. As Ulu is a small community in comparison to Naujaat there is a skills capacity issue when it comes to the co-operative. While the lack of skills capacity has not stopped the co-operative from successfully offering their community multiple services there is an opportunity to provide skills training in community to improve the co-operative's business and the opportunities available to current residents.

The three co-operatives that participated in this study maintain three key ideas or themed categories in common:

- 1) There is a link between the community and the co-operative that needs to be encouraged and developed to keep the economic activity of the community in the community.
- 2) Skills training to increase capacity of community members to better provide for the co-operative's growth

a a *a* *T* *a*
U a C a I *S B*

Appendices – for any detailed material

Appendix A: Project Work Plan

November 2016 - January 2017 (3 months)

- Ethics - This project will receive ethics approval from the University of Winnipeg Human Research Ethics Board and all principles outlined by OCAP for working with First Nations Peoples prior to any work commencing.
- Environmental scan of current business courses across Canada outlining any courses that include Indigenous content will be completed. A review of Post-secondary business school websites will be completed along with email and phone conversations to obtain an outline for any business courses that include Indigenous content.

July – September 2017 (3 months)

- Synthesis of collected documentation will be completed to develop tool kits for business operations such as governance, human resources, and management. The business documentation will also be reviewed for Indigenous content and this information will be used to highlight the unique characteristics of these business activities providing information for Indigenous focused case studies.

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Introduction:

Thank you for participating in this survey.

This survey will contribute to a greater understanding of co-operative businesses. The research is being conducted by the Business Chair of Co-operative Enterprises as part of the University of Winnipeg's work.

If you choose to participate in this survey it will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes of your time. The questions will focus on your perceptions of co-operative businesses. If, at any time, you do not wish to or have an answer for any of the questions, please feel free to move on to the next question.

You will not benefit directly from your involvement in this research project. However, we will be sharing with the participants our findings from the surveys.

The information you provide will be treated in confidence. You may choose to withdraw from the research study at any time, up until publication of the research findings. If you agree to participate in this study you are asked to return this survey in the self-address stamped envelope.

Survey Questions:

Demographics:

1) First Name _____

2) Last Name _____

3) Email _____

4) Age _____

5) Gender _____

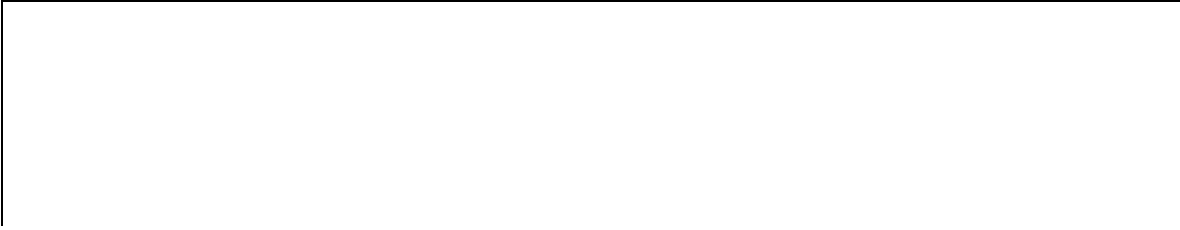
6) Cultural Identity

(e.g. Dakota, Ojibway, Oji-Cree, Cree, Dene, Metis, Inuk, Non-Indigenous)

7)

Co-operative Business:

1) What is your definition of a co-operative business?



Please **Circle** a response that best answers the question.

- 1) **How interested would you be in a post-secondary course on co-operatives?**

