



International Co-operative Alliance



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Co-op model positively impacts Canadian Arctic citizens

ICA President says Arctic Co-operatives sets example for global leaders

Quebec City, Canada. 9 October, 2012; Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, today highlighted the exceptional example that Canada's Arctic Co-operatives Ltd provides to global leaders, in demonstrating the power of the co-operative business model to turn around threatened communities and local economies.

Today, as many of the world's youth face an uncertain future due to the record unemployment rate brought on by the global financial crisis, and local communities experience government cutbacks and loss of services that impact low income earners most, the members of Arctic Co-operatives Ltd, are thriving.

"Your co-operatives have a great deal to teach a globe which is suffering from an economic downturn, because so many of your member co-operatives have grown out of exceptionally difficult economic circumstances," said Dame Pauline. "Your businesses are an inspiration to all co-operators and to the movement as a whole."

"The Co-op Model has positively impacted the quality of life for citizens of the Canadian Arctic for more than 50 years," said Andy Morrison, CEO of Arctic Co-operatives Ltd.

Not only were these remote co-operatives generating employment at a time when traditional industries were lost and livelihoods crippled, they were able to provide a social safety net for communities. Through their inclusive nature Arctic Co-operatives have given hope and purpose to the lives of many by encouraging traditional arts and crafts production and fostering new local industries.

Arctic Co-operatives features as one of the flagship stories in Building a Better World: 100 Stories of Co-operation, a book produced by the ICA in celebration of the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives 2012.

"We are thrilled to be part of this project, which celebrates the enduring Co-operative Movement in the Canadian Arctic, and around the world," said Mr Morrison. "In this year, declared by the United Nations as International Year of Co-operatives, this is a great way to share co-op success stories and advance awareness of the unique benefits and structure of the Co-op Model."

COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISES BUILD A BETTER WORLD



Arctic Co-operatives has 31 member co-operatives independently controlled Inuit and Dene businesses which operate in traditional arts and crafts, retail facilities, hotels, construction activities, property rentals and cable television operations. They employ about 900 people.

As Co-operatives, the local Co-ops in the Arctic return their profits to their member-owners in proportion to the business each member transacts with their Co-op. Last year the local Co-ops in the Arctic returned \$13.3 million in patronage refunds to their members.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

1. **The International Co-operative Alliance** is the global voice for the values-based business model of the co-operative, uniting co-operatives worldwide and providing a forum for knowledge and concerted action.

ICA was established by co-operatives in 1895. In 1946 the ICA became one of the first three non-governmental organisations to be accorded "consultative status" with the United Nations. Membership is growing and the ICA currently has members in almost 100 countries active in all sectors of the economy: agriculture/ forestry, banking/credit unions, consumer, health, insurance, workers, fisheries, housing, transport and tourism. ICA members represent around one billion people worldwide, and employ 100 million people.

2. **Co-operatives** are successful values based businesses owned by their members. Whether they are customers, employees or residents, the members get an equal say in the business and a share of the profits.
3. The United Nations has declared 2012 the **International Year of Co-operatives**. With its theme of 'co-operative enterprises build a better world', the Year is an opportunity to raise public awareness of how co-operatives are successful values based businesses owned by their members.
4. Further information about the International Year of Co-operatives is available at www.2012.coop.
5. Follow the ICA on **twitter** at @icacoop. Like the ICA's **Facebook** page at www.facebook.com/internationalcooperativealliance
6. For stories on co-operatives www.stories.coop
7. For more information on the book <http://2012.coop/en/iycbook>

8. You can read about Arctic Co-operatives and its members at www.stories.coop, including the story of Jaco Ishalutaq and the Pangnirtung co-operative, which struggled for survival in the 1970s but reinvigorated itself through a turbot farm and arts and crafts production, here <http://www.stories.coop/stories/video/jaco-ishulutaq-carving-demonstration-museum-inuit-art>

