

Most of the social care co-operatives in Quebec also have a third category of "Supportive Members" drawn from the local community. In such multi-stakeholder co-operatives, no one may be a member in more than one category, and the number of Supportive Members may not exceed one-third of the total of board members.

These multi-stakeholder co-operatives provide a well-balanced group in which service users can help to ensure quality services of the type they require at reasonable cost: the service providers can help ensure that reasonable wages are paid to attract good quality staff and that new working practices are fully discussed and approved before being brought into operation. The supportive members can help ensure that future needs of the local community are taken into account. They also provide a pool of expertise and advice to the co-operative in such matters as business planning, accountancy, legal requirements, staff recruitment and training, monitoring & evaluation etc.

Advantages of the Co-operative Model

As members of social care co-operatives able to participate in all aspects of the management and development of the enterprise, service users feel much more valued, respected and empowered. They provide mutual support for each other, relate much better to staff and management and in numerous attitude surveys express far greater satisfaction and fulfilment than users who are not members of a co-operative.

Surveys – both in Quebec and elsewhere – have also shown that members of social care co-operatives are less likely than others to require referral to other more intensive support services such as residential care. Some of the domestic help co-operatives in Quebec have recognised, however, that some people will inevitably require more intensive care at some time in their lives and are beginning to move into the residential care field so that the same co-operative ethos and environment will be available to their clients when a move to such accommodation becomes necessary.

Appendix

i. Origins of Domestic Help Social Economy Enterprises in Quebec

In 1996 there was a public outcry in Quebec when an elderly couple were separated and the wife moved hundreds of miles away because her needs could not be met locally. She died almost immediately after the move and her husband died less than a fortnight later. As a result, during two Socio-Economic Summits were organised in 1996, representing Government, Service Managers, Labour, and civic society – especially women's groups among diverse issues, they realised they faced a number of issues in the social care field, including increasing unmet need, poor quality services in some areas, a lack of work opportunities for women and a considerable amount of undeclared employment, or "moonlighting".

They decided to promote the establishment of Domestic Help Social Economy Enterprises (DHSEEs). The object was to provide:

- o Quality domestic services
- o Combat undeclared need
- o Provide well-paid jobs (for women in particular)
- o To avoid substitution of public sector provision.

A process was then agreed to authorise or validate groups capable of providing a service to the proper standard. As noted above, Regional Development Co-operatives were established in each of the province's 17 regions to promote the establishment of Co-operative DHSEEs.

Co-operative Residential Care

Quebec has led the way in establishing Domestic Help Social Care Co-operatives in Canada.

Co-operation in the social care field in other Canadian provinces has tended to concentrate on the provision of residential accommodation. Some are now moving towards Domestic Help co-operatives along the Quebec model whilst some of the Quebec co-operatives are beginning to consider the extension of their services into the residential field.

Further Information

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Social Care Co-operatives

A success story in Quebec



Based on a paper by
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and a recent tour of Wales by
John Restakis M.A. BA Executive Director,
British Columbia Co-operative Association

Foreword

I heard John Restakis speak about Quebec and Bologna at a Co-operatives UK Congress in June 2011 and our social co-op journey in Wales started. Jean-Pierre Girard, who had the same message, was to visit Paris in February and a thirty-six hour visit was agreed. This was financed by Cymru / Wales Co-operative Membership, Public Health Alliance Cymru and the Welsh Food Alliance.

The key aspect was Jean Pierre presenting detailed evidence we had commissioned for a National Assembly for Wales Residential Care Inquiry, including a summary of a Canadian 'Elder Care Co-ops' report by John Restakis.

Meetings took place with Gwenda Thomas AM, the Social Services Minister; Edwina Hart AM, the Business Minister, housing and equalities officials. Vaughan Gething AM chaired a reception for Assembly members, Rosemary Butler AM sponsored a public meeting and BBC Radio Wales featured a ten-minute interview.

Jean-Pierre's visit was followed by a speaking tour with John Restakis across Wales in June. We held fourteen meetings and reached 750 people. These were timely: -

- i. They gave a robust international perspective in UN Year of Co-operation: evidencing the practical relevance of co-operation
- ii. It was a good time to influence forthcoming Welsh Social Services, Housing and Sustainable Development legislation
- iii. The global financial crisis and its implications has enabled us to rethink responses to growing unmet needs
- iv. With support from Adrian Roper at Cartrefi Cymru, we were able to stimulate a great deal of interest across civic society.

In this pamphlet we evidence the success story in Quebec. This requires both co-operative education and interested members if we are to create local self help social co-ops to support future developments in Wales and further afield.

David Smith
Newport
October 2012

Quebec

With some 8 million people, Quebec is the second largest province in Canada. The Provincial Government is responsible for Health and Social Care services, but up to 1996 most care was provided by Voluntary Organisations and private, profit-making companies.

By Now a high percentage of social care is provided by Domestic Help Social Economy Enterprises (DHSEEs). There were 101 of these enterprises in 2007, of which 47 were co-operatives. Between them, they provided 5.1 million hours of service to over 76,000 people, employing 6,000 staff (90% of whom were women). Annual sales had reached \$106 million.

Services Provided

Each DHSEE decides for itself what services to provide, but the following is a representative list:

- o Housework of all kinds
- o Laundry/ironing
- o Shopping and other errands
- o Preparation of meals
- o Light outdoor maintenance

Several of the enterprises also provide additional services such as:

- o Washing/dressing
- o Assistance with eating
- o Help with form filling and other correspondence
- o Taking people on trips outside their home
- o Sitting services to provide relief for family/carers

Funding

The provincial government provides grants to approved DHSEEs to assist with start up costs and additional revenue grants of between 15% and 20% of total running costs.

Service users are responsible for meeting service charges but the provincial government pays them a basic sum of \$4 per hour of service provided. A supplementary payment

is also available to those who cannot afford any balance: this varies between \$0.55 and \$8.55 per hour depending on means, Tax credits for such services are also available for those over 70.

On-going Support

The provincial government also funds 11 Regional Development Co-operatives, which employ some 60 specialists to promote the development of new social care co-operatives enabling them to establish viable local enterprises. The provincial government also gives these RDCs extra bonus payments for each new co-operative established.

A Federation of social care co-operatives has also been established to provide mutual support for existing social care co-operatives. A great deal of support is also provided by other co-operative ventures such as banking and financial services (Desjardins).

The Co-operative model

In contrast with other countries, in Quebec the title "Co-operative" is legally protected and to be able use this description organisations have to comply with certain principles. These include:

- o They must prioritise the well-being of members and of the local community above profits
- o They must be autonomous of the state and have independent management
- o They must abide by democratic processes involving both users and workers
- o Any surplus must be used to promote people and employment
- o They must act at all times on the principles of participation, self-help and individual & collective responsibility

Membership

Membership of a co-operative may consist of the producers of goods and services (the providers), the consumers of goods and services (customers or clients) or both.