Social Responsibility and Canada’s Credit Unions
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**fresh approaches, stronger communities, the spirit of co-operation**

A different kind of financial institution, making a difference! Canadian credit unions are unique in the ways that they conduct business and serve their members. We open accounts, complete transactions, accept deposits, offer business services, and much more. But what we celebrate as the *credit union difference* extends far beyond our financial services. As member-owned co-operatives, local credit unions have a long, distinguished history of reflecting the strength of their co-operative values in forging stronger communities. Locally this spirit drives community economic development, dedicated volunteerism, community sponsorships, scholarships, bursaries and a wide range of charitable giving. In each community this commitment to sustaining strong communities is at the core of the credit union difference.

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1. **Our Strong Values**

2. **Giving**

6. **Community Economic Development**

8. **Social Responsibility**

Social Responsibility is the principle of considering the interests and community welfare extending well beyond direct business practices. As financial co-operatives, owned and controlled by their member-customers, credit unions bring fresh approaches to social responsibility that are as individual and exceptional as the communities themselves.

- **$28.5 million** in donations and sponsorships
- **$1.4 million** in scholarships and bursaries
- **$1.2 million** in donations to charitable foundations

**making a difference**

one community at a time
Our Strong Values

In 2012, Canada’s credit unions contributed more than $35.6 million to their communities in the form of direct donations, financial services, sponsorships, scholarships and bursaries.

Care and caring are at the heart of the Canadian credit union movement. In today’s business world many organizations have added some form of community outreach to their core activities. Yet, for credit unions, social responsibility and accountability go to the very core of our daily operations. In a world of globalization and the quest for broader markets, credit unions are local and anchored in our communities. While the average Canadian corporate charitable giving level has consistently hovered near one per cent of profits, many Canadian credit unions set higher targets which they consistently meet or exceed.

From modest roots that run deep into Canadian communities, for more than 100 years credit union membership has meant local control for ordinary people building financial futures for their families and friends. Organized locally, according to a co-operative model, credit unions have consistently provided urgently needed savings and lending services, at fair rates.

Today’s credit unions are modern financial institutions playing a vibrant role in the Canadian economy. Using sound financial judgment, credit unions are cornerstones of community strength, growth and giving.

Giving – Through donations, services, scholarships and volunteerism, credit unions contributed more than $35.6 million to individuals and organizations in Canadian communities during 2012. That figure includes nearly $28.5 million in monetary donations and sponsorships.

Community Economic Development – Credit unions enhance their communities by supporting a variety of local economic initiatives and offering reduced or waived service charges to community groups.

Social Responsibility – Canada’s credit unions consistently demonstrate their commitment to the co-operative spirit by practising socially responsible management. With 1,759 locations and more than 5.3 million members, there is scarcely a corner of the country that is untouched by this commitment to contribute to economic development, while improving the quality of life for members, employees, their families and their communities at large.
Giving

Social giving strengthens and binds credit unions to their roots – sustainable, vibrant communities. After all, sharing is one of the strengths at the heart of the credit union movement. In 2012, the credit unions surveyed reported donations and sponsorships of more than $28.5 million in support of thousands of local services, health care, sports activities, community initiatives, social services, and cultural events. Nearly $1.4 million was also given in the form of bursaries and scholarships.

The Credit Union Community Involvement Survey defines donations as “gifts” to a fund or organization, where nothing but goodwill is received in return. Sponsorships, on the other hand, usually involve a two-way arrangement in which the giver receives something in return – usually advertising, free publicity and increased public awareness.

Overall, reported annual donations and sponsorships from credit unions have remained well in excess of the target of one per cent of pre-tax profits set by the Imagine Canada A CARING COMPANY™ program, which sets commitment guidelines for corporate philanthropy.

Credit union leadership reflects the depth of commitment by members and employees to share the benefits of credit union membership with our communities. Among survey respondents, the average credit union contributed donations and sponsorships amounted to $115,756 in 2012.

Giving Time

In 2010, Statistics Canada surveyed over 15,000 Canadians aged 15 and over for The Canada Survey for Giving, Volunteering and Participating. Canadians donated a total of $10.6 billion and volunteered almost 2.1 billion hours in 2010 – the equivalent of close to 1.1 million full time jobs. Nearly 24 million people,
or 84 per cent of the population made a financial donation to a charitable or non-profit organization. At the same time, more than 13.3 million people volunteered their time through a group or an organization.

As leaders in community volunteerism, credit union employees have long been counted in this group, reflecting a deep commitment to building strong communities. In 2012, 55 per cent of Canadian credit unions that responded to the Credit Union Community Involvement Survey stated that their employees participated in community activities as part of their paid work. In addition, 76 per cent of credit union respondents stated that employees participated in community activities and/or organizations representing the credit union during their unpaid time off in 2012.

Outside of work time, credit union employees are enthusiastic supporters of their local communities. Staff unpaid volunteerism is high, with 76 per cent of respondents saying that employees volunteer for community activities/organizations, representing the credit union without pay on their personal time. Volunteerism is so important that it has become an integral part of employee performance evaluations for 38 per cent of responding credit unions.

Canada’s 27,600 credit union employees bring significant value to their volunteer service with local organizations – often serving on boards or committees and helping to provide financial and management expertise for everything ranging from sports leagues and seniors’ clubs to local hospitals and charitable foundations.

Note: Credit unions were asked to select all categories that apply. Multiple selections were possible and as such responses do not add to 100%.
Strong and Generous

Fundraising
Credit unions not only give back to their communities with direct donations, they are connected and involved in fundraising for community causes. In 2012, 64 per cent of the credit unions participating in the Community Involvement Survey conducted fundraising activities for charitable organizations. These efforts generate donations by employees as well as credit union members and the public. Fundraising includes a wide variety of activities on behalf of local causes to broader national and international relief programs.

Credit Union Foundations
More than $1.2 million was contributed to the 21 credit union charitable foundations in 2012. In turn, these foundations disbursed more than $1.6 million to worthwhile causes.

Imagine Canada
Imagine Canada is a national charity that looks into and out for Canada’s charitable and non-profit sector with research and input into public policy. Imagine Canada’s A CARING COMPANY™ members are leaders in corporate citizenship. Each member commits to Imagine Canada’s principles of good corporate citizenship, and demonstrates its commitment to corporate citizenship by:
- donating one per cent of pre-tax profits to community
- developing at least one community project
- publishing a brief report about its activities each year

Among Canadian credit unions and system affiliates, 15 have formalized their commitment to investing in community philanthropy by becoming A CARING COMPANY™ members.
Donations-in-Kind
Of the credit unions participating in the Community Involvement Survey, 67 per cent made non-cash donations-in-kind in 2012. The value of these donations was nearly $2.1 million, with an average of $13,432 per contributing credit union.

Scholarships and Bursaries
To aid education throughout Canada, almost three-quarters of respondents (73 per cent) awarded scholarships and bursaries in 2012. According to the survey, the total amount distributed by credit unions for scholarships and bursaries was nearly $1.4 million in 2012 benefiting more than 1,600 students. The average amount of scholarships/bursaries given per credit union was $8,068 up from $6,332 in 2011.

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Source: 2013 Credit Union Community Involvement Survey (conducted in 2013 for the 2012 fiscal year).
* Among credit unions giving scholarships and bursaries.
Community Economic Development

Community development is a process involving local people striving towards priorities or goals established by themselves, for themselves, based on shared experiences and values. For credit unions and their communities, community economic development projects have a significant impact on both social and economic growth. The economic leadership that credit unions provide can assume many forms – from giving direct financial assistance to providing low-cost financial services, to volunteering the initiative and financial expertise needed to pull together community resources to achieve a worthwhile community objective.

Value of Discounted Financial Services to Community Organizations in 2012

Total Value: $2,450,318
Reduced or Waived: $2,070,441
Other: $379,877

Reduced or waived service charges – 84%
Other special services – 16%

Credit union respondents to the Credit Union Community Involvement Survey contributed more than $2.4 million in financial services to community organizations in 2012. Included in this figure are waived service charges, increased interest rates on deposits, and providing other financial services free of charge to community organizations. These contributions enable many nonprofit organizations to maintain operations that directly benefit the community and support economic development.

Waived or reduced service charges are the most popular form of financial service credit unions offer to community organizations. In 2012, this service was offered by 155 credit unions to 36,421 community organizations.

“Other” types of financial services to community organizations total $379,877 and include services such as:

- Auditing books
- Free cheques/personalized cheques
- Increased interest on deposits/preferred term rates
- Preferred borrowing rates
- Office services

Taking all forms of financial services into account, 37,143 community organizations were provided discounted services by local credit unions in 2012.
National Award Recognizes Local Contributions
Helping communities grow represents a major priority for credit unions across Canada. Since 1988, the National Credit Union Award for Community Economic Development has honoured the outstanding efforts of credit unions engaging in projects that emphasize community self-help and which deliver clear social and economic benefits.

Investing in Communities
Credit unions are strong supporters of community development and play a key role in fostering community interests. The recipient of the 2013 National Credit Union Award for Community Economic Development went to Vancouver City Savings Credit Union (Vancity), BC, for their Resilient Capital™ Program. Launched in 2011 in partnership between Vancity and the Vancouver Foundation, the Resilient Capital™ Program offers depositors the opportunity to make a guaranteed fixed return on their money while backing social enterprises with high growth potential. This successful program has attracted more than 20 institutional and individual depositors who collectively have contributed over $13.5 million in Resilient Capital Term Deposits, including a $3.5 million loan loss reserve provided by the two partners. Vancity was able to leverage its $1.75M investment to create this fund that is expected to reach $15M by the end of 2013. To date, the Resilient Capital™ program has provided more than $4 million in financing to eleven social enterprises.

Building Strong Communities
Community economic development solutions championed by credit unions are as diverse as the communities they serve. Here are some past examples from the National Credit Union Award for Community Economic Development:

- The recipient of the 2012 National Credit Union Award for Community Economic Development was Alterna Savings and Credit Union, ON. A strong supporter of small businesses, Alterna Savings developed a micro finance program to provide passionate entrepreneurs, who do not typically meet the lending criteria of most traditional financial institutions, the skills and resources they need to create a sustainable future for themselves, their families, and for the community.
- Vancouver City Savings Credit Union (Vancity), BC, was the recipient of the 2011 National Credit Union Award for Community Economic Development for their Each One, Teach One program. The program addresses a gap in traditional formal literacy with a less formal, more adaptable curriculum that is basic in concept, offers key concept translation into multiple languages, and draws upon Vancity’s own frontline staff to be taught to become the program’s facilitators.
  Since its inception in late 2008, over six dozen staff delivered the Each One, Teach One program, training over 3,500 community members in more than 26 languages. While managers were originally offered financial support to cover their staff participation, staff across Vancity now see participation as an unpaid volunteer perk of employment. Both staff participation and community involvement have grown every year. This initiative is a great example of a strong commitment to redefining financial literacy.
- Beaubear Credit Union of Miramichi, NB, was the 2010 award recipient for their efforts in the development of a much needed public transit system.
  Beaubear’s CEO chaired the advisory board that worked with local organizations to develop a business model for a transit system that could work in their community. Funds were secured from federal and provincial governments. Beaubear Credit Union committed to providing financial support for the transit system over the next 10 years in the form of advertising on two of the buses.
  In August 2009 Miramichi City Transit officially launched and reports monthly ridership over 4,500. This project serves as a wonderful example of community economic development that provides inspiration to other small rural credit unions in Canada.

Winners of the National Credit Union Award for Community Economic Development show how credit unions participate in local economic development initiatives from conception to completion, through effective partnerships with community-based organizations. Entries honoured over the years included affordable housing and mortgage initiatives, small business microlending programs, financial assistance for less advantaged community members and supportive financing of nonprofit community organizations.
Social Responsibility

For credit unions, social responsibility means taking responsibility for the impact of business activities on customers, employees, shareholders, other community members and the environment. It is a core principle leading to voluntary steps to improve the quality of life for employees and their families as well as, for the local community and society at large. In recent years, many of Canada’s credit unions have led the way with responsible employment, governance, environmental and investment programs and policies. And throughout their history, credit unions have empowered Canada’s consumers with innovative products and services, which have often been imitated by other financial institutions.

Building Future Leaders

Growing the talents of future young leaders is one of the most important goals of the Canadian credit union system. Recognizing, retaining and responding to credit union youth will allow us to sustain our values in the next generation of strong, socially responsible leaders.

Created by Credit Union Central of Canada’s Board of Directors, the National Credit Union Young Leaders Award recognizes tomorrow’s leaders in Canada’s credit union system and encourages further leadership development.

Eligible candidates must be 35 years of age or younger, with two years employment in the Canadian credit union system and a minimum of two years in a leadership/management position. Demonstrated leadership competencies are required, including management of a major credit union initiative and participation in community initiatives.

One of the five finalists receives the National Credit Union Young Leaders Award which includes a $10,000 scholarship to cover tuition and travel costs to attend a leadership development program at a university in Canada.
The selection committee examines each nominee’s accomplishments, their written essay, their commitment to the co-operative spirit, and the nomination letter written by the CEO of a provincial Central, a credit union’s CEO, General Manager or the credit union’s Board Chair.

Finalists may become members of the National Young Leaders Committee, formed to contribute to the development of young leaders within the system. The committee is comprised of young leaders from across the country with a vision to make the credit union system the number one employer for young leaders in the financial services industry.

2013 National Young Leaders Award Winners
Benjamin Janzen, Stewardship in Action Advisor, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, ON received the 2013 National Credit Union Young Leaders Award scholarship. Four other outstanding finalists were also recognized:
• Kris Babbings, Business Development Manager
  Affinity Credit Union, SK
• Brian Bevilacqua, Manager, Communications and Public Relations, First West Credit Union, BC
• Cheryl McCormack, Branch Manager
  Bayview Credit Union, NB
• Devin Selte, Assistant Branch Manager
  Servus Credit Union, AB

Employers of Choice
As member-owners of credit unions, virtually all employees have a key stake in the organizations that employ them. This gives them a profound influence both on the policies that affect them and their enthusiasm for their work. As a result, credit unions and other co-operative organizations tend to be employers of choice, with progressive, forward-looking employment policies – reflecting co-operative values and principles.

In 2013, Desjardins Group and Co-operators Life Insurance Company were included on the list of Canada’s Top Employers for Young People, a competition organized by the editors of Canada’s Top 100 Employers. The employers on this list are Canada’s leaders in attracting and retaining younger employees, and offer the nation’s best benefits for younger workers.

Training and Development Opportunities
CUSOURCE Credit Union Knowledge Network (CUSOURCE Knowledge Network) understands that people are the source of competitive advantage; further, that easy access to relevant knowledge is what will drive and sustain that advantage. As a result, CUSOURCE Knowledge Network is dedicated to providing credit union employees and board directors across Canada with access to a variety of continuous learning and development opportunities - some through online learning technologies; others through the dynamic of learners and facilitators in classroom space.

CUSOURCE Knowledge Network is also the hub for the Credit Union Institute of Canada (CUIC Inc.), which offers professional accreditation and designation programs in partnership with Dalhousie University.

Credentials and Credibility.
Built by and for the Canadian credit union system, CUSOURCE Knowledge Network is dedicated to building the competencies that drive personal and corporate success, that drive competitive advantage. National in scope; focused on who it serves.

Democratic Governance
Strong credit unions contribute to building strong communities. For credit unions, one of the key sources of strength lies in sound corporate governance policies and practices. Because credit unions are democratic institutions owned by the members they serve, they must be accountable, open and transparent. Building these attributes and governance expertise is the goal of the national Credit Union Director Achievement (CUDA®) Program.

Further, since 2007, credit union directors have been able to earn the distinction of Accredited Canadian Credit Union Director (ACCUD) through the long standing partnership between CUSOURCE Knowledge Network and Dalhousie University. This national Accreditation is a mark of directors’ commitment to the credit unions and communities they serve.

Progressive Employers
As employers, Canadian credit unions are recognized for progressive policies such as profit sharing, flexible benefit plans, flexible work schedules, supporting volunteer work, employee wellness plans and educational support.

**Canada’s Best Employers**

Every year, credit unions make it to the list of the 50 Best Employers in Canada – a survey in which employees decide which organizations make the list. In 2013, Coastal Community Credit Union (BC), Conexus Credit Union (SK) [8th year in a row], Vancouver City Savings Credit Union - Vancity (BC), Island Savings Credit Union (BC) and Westminster Savings (BC) made the list. Also included was The Co-operators (ON). The 50 Best Employers survey, conducted by Aon Hewitt, measures employee engagement and shows that organizations with high employee engagement have a greater ability to attract and retain key talent.

Each year credit unions are also included in the list of top small and medium-sized employers in the country. In 2013, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (ON), and North Shore Credit Union (now called BlueShore Financial) (BC) have made the list of 50 Best Small and Medium Employers in Canada for companies with 50 to 399 employees.

The credit unions were selected in the annual survey by Queen’s Centre for Business Venturing at Queen’s School of Business and Aon Hewitt, in partnership with The Globe and Mail. Winners were chosen based on employee engagement, defined as the emotional and intellectual involvement or commitment of the workforce.

**Canada’s Top 100 Employers Competition**

Vancouver City Savings Credit Union has appeared in both the 2012 and 2013 annual Canada’s Top 100 Employers competition to determine which employers lead their industries in offering exceptional workplaces for their employees. Desjardins Group also appeared
on this list. The list, compiled by Mediacorp Canada Inc., examines employers based on a detailed review of eight criteria including Work Atmosphere & Social; Health, Financial & Family Benefits; Training & Skills Development; and Community Involvement. Employers are compared to other organizations in their field to determine which offers the most progressive and forward-thinking programs.

Management Excellence

*Canada’s 50 Best Managed Companies* is the country’s leading business awards program, recognizing excellence in Canadian-owned and managed companies with revenues over $10 million. In 2012, several credit unions again made the list of Canada’s 50 Best Managed Companies. The list includes *Servus Credit Union (AB)*, *Concentra Financial (SK)*, *Coast Capital Savings Credit Union (BC)*, and *First Calgary Financial Credit Union (AB)*.

The program evaluates management skills and practices and awards are granted on three levels: (1) Best Managed winners, with 50 new winners selected each year; (2) Repeat winners; (3) Platinum Club members — winners that have maintained their Best Managed status for a minimum of six consecutive years. Servus Credit Union, Concentra Financial, Coast Capital Savings Credit Union and First Calgary Financial Credit Union are all members of the Platinum Club.

Socially Responsible Investing

Socially responsible investing integrates personal values, as well as environmental and social factors, with investment decisions. Underpinning this approach is the view that investors care where their money goes, and that they want to make a profit on their investments – but not at any cost.

Credit unions have been pioneers in socially responsible investing. In 1986, the *Ethical Growth Fund®* was launched by a credit union in British Columbia. At the time, it was the only socially responsible mutual fund in Canada. Available just to the local market, the fund attracted $10 million in its first year.
Ethical Funds®

Founded by the credit unions in 1992, Ethical Funds is Canada’s leader in socially responsible investing.

Companies with strong financial performance and good environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices have the greatest potential to outperform and mitigate risk in the long term. That’s why Ethical Funds’ work is about both financial performance and improving how companies do business.

Ethical Funds is Canada’s largest and most comprehensive family of sustainable investments with mutual funds in all asset categories plus the Ethical Select Portfolios—a fund of funds solution.

Corporate Engagement

The Ethical Funds ESG Investing Program uses a multifaceted evaluations process and corporate engagement to encourage companies to adopt positive and sustainable business practices that not only make them better corporate citizens but more attractive long term investments as well.

On behalf of Ethical Funds, The NEI ESG Services Team encourages companies to improve their ESG practices through dialogue, shareholder resolutions and proxy voting. Key to this corporate engagement approach is the dialogue. Through progressive dialogue, they seek to communicate concerns about ESG practices directly to corporate management in order to improve company policy, disclosure and performance in these areas. For more information visit www.ethicalfunds.com.

Ethical Funds is a division of NEI Investments.

Sharing Innovative Ideas

To continue to meet community needs as local financial institutions, credit unions must constantly innovate to ensure excellence in financial services and in service delivery to members and stakeholders.

Credit unions keep the spirit of co-operation alive by practising the principle of “co-operation among co-operatives.” They share innovations and breakthroughs in service delivery to benefit credit union members throughout the country.

Credit Union Innovation Award

Established in 2003, the National Credit Union Innovation Award highlights the role of individual credit unions in creating groundbreaking solutions that serve as a model for others. It encourages fresh approaches that place credit unions at the forefront of service and organizational excellence.

Innovation Award Winners

The recipient of Credit Union Central of Canada’s 2013 National Credit Union Innovation Award went to North Peace Savings and Credit Union (North Peace Savings), BC, for their introduction of Personal Teller Machines (PTMs) - a tool designed to provide financial services to members in remote and underserved communities of Northern British Columbia.

PTMs were first installed in Fort St. John and Fort Nelson, Canada’s most northerly credit union location and shortly after installed a PTM and a ‘virtual office’ in Taylor - a town that was managing their finances through ‘white label’ ATMs that were not affiliated with any financial institution.

To reach members, North Peace Savings utilized various communication methods along with magazine, newspaper, radio, airport, theatre and online ads.

Survey results show PTMs and the virtual smart office in Taylor are clear winners with members. North Peace Savings has higher member satisfaction and grew their membership by 5.7 per cent in their first year. Currently, PTMs are being used for an average of 2500 sessions each month and delivering services at one tenth the cost of a conventional branch. By addressing the needs of under-served communities and collaborating effectively, North Peace Savings and Credit Union has demonstrated excellence in innovation and member service.

Past Winners include:

(2012) Synergy Credit Union for its Account Opening Tool
(2011) Saskatchewan Credit Unions for Apex Investment Fund
(2010) FirstOntario Credit Union for Community Assistance Program
(2009) Servus Credit Union for Young & Free Alberta
For information about local community involvement initiatives, contact your local credit union or caisse populaire.

**Credit Union Central of Canada**
Toronto Office, ON (416) 232-1262; 1-800-649-0222
Ottawa Office, ON (613) 238-6747
www.cucentral.ca

This site provides links to Centrals and other co-operative organizations, as well as a “locator” service to help you find your local credit union branch and Automated Teller Machines.

**Central 1 Credit Union**
*Headquarters and British Columbia Region:*
Vancouver, BC (604) 734-2511; 1-800-661-6813
www.central1.com

*Ontario Region:*
Mississauga, ON (905) 238-9400; 1-800-661-6813
www.central1.com

**Credit Union Central Alberta Limited**
Calgary, AB (403) 258-5900
www.albertacentral.com
www.albertacreditunions.com

**SaskCentral**
*(Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan)*
Regina, SK (306) 566-1200; 1-866-403-7499
www.saskcu.com/saskcentral

**Credit Union Central of Manitoba**
Winnipeg, MB (204) 985-4700
www.creditunion.mb.ca

**Atlantic Central**
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*Riverview Office*
Riverview, NB (506) 857-8184

*Charlottetown Office*
Charlottetown, PE (902) 566-3350
www.atlanticcreditunions.ca

**L’Alliance des caisses populaires de l’Ontario limitée**
North Bay, ON (705) 474-5634
www.caissealliance.com

**Concentra Financial Services Association**
Saskatoon, SK; 1-800-788-6311
www.concentrafinancial.ca

**The Co-operators Group Limited**
Guelph, ON (519) 824-4400; 1-800-265-2662
www.cooperators.ca

**The CUMIS Group Limited**
Burlington, ON (905) 632-1221; 1-800-263-9120
www.cumis.com

**CUSOURCE Credit Union Knowledge Network**
Toronto, ON (416) 232-1262; 1-888-367-1386
www.cusource.ca

**NEI Investments**
Toronto, ON (416) 594-6633; 1-888-809-3333
www.NEIinvestments.com

**Credential Financial Inc.**
Vancouver, BC (604) 714-3800; 1-855-714-3800
www.credential.com