

Woodsworth's Social Audit Objective #6

Fairness

To be responsive to minority needs, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, ability, ethnic background, income, etc.

FINDINGS

Committee Involvement

61% of our members have served on a committee.

16% have served on board in last 5 years. The majority of board members have been between 35 and 64 years of age with only one from the under 24's and over 65's having served in the last 5 years.

31% have been on another elected committee in the past 5 years. The elected committees also reflect the lack of representation of the young groups. Among the reason most often given for not standing for election were preference for other forms of contributing and shift work.

55% have served on a non-elected committee. Again the younger members (16-24) are under represented. The same finding surfaced in the non-member survey.

15% of members responded that they intend to run in the next three years for some elected position. Somewhat encouraging was the 21% amongst the 25-34 age group and the newer members (0-5 years) who said they intended to run.

A further 41% of members indicated they would consider running.

Committee Experience

60% indicated that their experience on a committee was positive.

The 6 most important suggestions for improving committees were: good chairing, appropriate information for decision-making, full participation by all committee members, minutes and information received on time, agenda items better identified (eg, for info only), more support and feedback from the board.

Board Experience

Of those that have served as board members over the last 5 years, as many reported positive as negative experiences.

The 6 top ideas for making the board more effective were:
more delegating to committees, adopt measurable goals and deadlines, appropriate information for decision-making, regular committee reports, full participation by all board members, more training.

Other Co-op Involvement

3% of members have taken a CHFT course.

19.5% of members have been or are members of other co-op/credit union

34% of members stated that they have participated in lobby or letter campaign for housing. The survey shows that those with higher education and higher income were more likely to participate in such lobbying activities.

Causes we should support

Members thought we should support and / or donate money to:

Co-op movement, 52%; neighbourhood, 51%; environment, 49%; youth programs, 45%; homelessness, 40%; neighbourhood food bank, 39%; hunger, 35%; charitable organizations, 22%; women's issues, 21%; peace, 18%; labour issues, 12%.

Last time we distinguished between moral and financial support, but in every case the numbers were higher. On the other hand, we only offered five choices.

IMPLICATIONS

This is evidence that we have a broad base of members who have been involved in some aspect of the running of our co-op. There is a need for increased involvement on committees by certain groups; for instance, persons with disabilities, persons with lower levels of education, and newcomers to the co-op (0-5 years). Of course, some members may be participating in other ways.

Donations The figures have declined significantly from first audit, but comparisons may be misleading. At present, the co-op makes an annual charitable donation (approximately \$4000) to a number of organizations after consulting the members.

There does seem to be a willingness to run for committees, but the co-op may need to take proactive measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That CHFT courses be better promoted.

That members become more active in the donation procedure. A priority list should be established using the survey results for ranking.

That the co-op encourage participation in elected committees in a variety of ways; e.g., holding meetings during different times, providing a list of babysitters, etc.

To ensure that our older and younger members are adequately represented that the co-op investigate ways of having at least one senior and one person under 25 on the Board of Directors.