



## COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Northeast Center  
for Cooperative Business

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

## 2010: Year In Review

**C**ooperative Development Institute (CDI) is the Northeast's center for cooperative business education, training and technical assistance. This is our 16th year of operation.

We seek to build a cooperative economy by helping a diverse group of clients develop successful cooperative enterprises and networks in New England and New York. We also link nationally and internationally to the worldwide cooperative community.

### Co-ops succeed in hard times

2010 was a good year for CDI and its clients, and for co-ops and credit unions in general. Co-ops have performed well despite the global financial crisis, largely because cooperatives are designed to meet human needs, rather than maximize monetary gain.

This year, CDI was awarded \$200,000 from USDA's Rural Cooperative Development Grant program. We leveraged an additional \$180,000 in grants and contracts and \$67,000 in matches and third party in-kind value, for a total of nearly \$450,000 in resources for cooperative development. We were also awarded two USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants to provide training and technical assistance to co-ops in Connecticut (\$49,749) and business and organizational assistance to the Data Commons project (\$39,313)(p3). A USDA Small Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grant (\$36,500) supports work with a produce marketing co-op in NY.

CDI joined Resident Owned Communities 'ROC-USA' and launched the Southern New England Resident Owned Communities (SNEROC) program. We met with residents of parks in four states, and in November we helped our first cooperative purchase property and become resident owners (p2).

CDI itself grew in 2010. New staff member Jeremiah Ward will help Andy Danforth run the

SNEROC program, among other duties. We also welcomed four outstanding new board members: Erica Buswell of Belfast Food Co-op (ME), Kimalee Williams of Faith Asset Management (CT), Rosemary Fifield of Hanover Consumers Co-op (NH/VT), and Greg Brodsky of The Bike Cooperative, a division of CCA Global (NH).



Photo: Callie Hastings

At Turkey Hill Farm in Randolph Center, Vermont, they do their maple sugaring as a community, using draft horses. "At night," says Callie Hastings of Fat Toad Farm in neighboring Brookfield, "we spend a lot of time hanging around eating good food."

Some of these Vermont farmers recently formed Floating Bridge Food and Farms, an agritourism cooperative that includes 'value-added' food producers, as well as owners of overnight accommodations and dining establishments.

The name refers to the bridge across nearby Sunset Lake, built in 1820 and the only floating bridge east of the Mississippi. The co-op offers food products, classes, workshops, farm tours and homestays that afford a rare opportunity to experience life on a small family farm. CDI helped the initial steering committee with incorporation and business planning.

## CDI Clients

### REGIONAL

FISHERMEN'S WIVES  
COLLABORATIVE  
COMMUNITY SUPPORTED  
FISHERIES  
RESIDENT OWNED  
COMMUNITIES  
NEW ENGLAND FARMERS  
MARKET MGR. TRAININGS  
EQUIPMENT SHARING CO-OPS  
AG. MARKETING CO-OP  
MULTISTAKEHOLDER SHARED  
DATABASE  
AG. PROCESSING  
ASSOCIATION

### CONNECTICUT

FAIR TRADE CAFE  
CO-OP SPECIAL NEEDS FARM-  
STEAD RESIDENCE  
CO-OP BUSINESS INCUBATOR  
COMMERCIAL CO-OP KITCHEN  
GREEN ENERGY WORKER CO-OP  
COUNTY ARTS ORGANIZATION  
CSA/CONSUMER CO-OP  
MULTISTAKEHOLDER DAIRY  
ALLIANCE  
COMMUNITY OWNED  
MERCANTILE  
ARTIST & ARTISAN INITIATIVE  
CO-OP BUSINESS ACADEMY

### MAINE

CO-OP BAKERY  
PUBLISHING CO-OP  
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL  
SHARED VEHICLE ENTERPRISE  
GREEN-ENERGY CITIZENS  
FAITH-BASED SOCIAL SERVICE  
AGENCY  
FARM-TO-SCHOOL  
COLLABORATIVE  
LAMB PRODUCERS LLC  
ORGANIC MILLING  
PRODUCERS' COOPERATIVE

### MASSACHUSETTS

RURAL INN CONVERSION  
COUNTRY STORE CONVERSION  
FAMILY-OWNED MARKET  
CONVERSION  
COMMUNITY FOOD CO-OP  
2 ARTISTS' CO-OPS  
CONTRACTORS' CO-OP  
WOOL POOL  
POULTRY PROCESSING CO-OP  
AG. MARKETING CO-OP  
COMMUNITY SUPPORTED  
FISHERY  
COMMUNITY HOLISTIC HEALTH  
COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER  
MUNICIPAL BROADBAND  
CO-OP  
COUNTY SCHOOL  
COMMITTEE CAUCUS  
COURSE DEVELOPMENT: MIT  
AUTO REPAIR WORKER CO-OP  
LOCAL FOOD COOPERATIVE  
MUNICIPAL SHARING/  
PURCHASING CO-OP  
EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS  
WORKER CO-OP  
GROCERY STORE CO-OP  
CONVERSION

## Connecting People and Organizations to Resources, Allies, Information

CDI FOCUS: FOOD

### Maine Organic Milling Co-op

When the local Blue Seal feed mill went up for sale in 2009, twelve organic dairy farmers incorporated Maine Organic Milling Cooperative and bought the mill, with support from Organic Valley Co-op and CDI. The farmers hope to sell the feed to farmers in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Vermont.

All the farmers are members of Organic Valley Co-op, whose farm resources manager commented to a reporter, "The relationship between Maine Organic Milling and Organic Valley...offers an example of two cooperatives working together for mutual benefit to fulfill their common mission."

MOM Co-op member Steve Russell

added, "We need this feed mill right in our own back yard. Our cooperative model and the attitude of banding together is what keeps us and our farms together."

CDI provided the emerging cooperative with organizational guidance, assistance in legal structuring, and feasibility research.



The state's only dedicated organic grain mill was built in 1963 on a 2-acre plot in Auburn, Maine, is right next to the railroad tracks. With its loading and weighing station and 10 storage tanks, the co-op is well positioned to grow. Photo by Daryn Slover/Lewiston Sun-Journal. See story 5/15/10 by Lindsay Tice.

## Increasing Constituent Capacity

CDI FOCUS: HOUSING

### Quabbin Sunrise Co-op

In 2010, residents of a manufactured home park became owners of their park by forming Quabbin Sunrise Co-op—65 homes on 100 acres near the scenic Quabbin Reservoir in Ware, Massachusetts.

Residents bought the park from a New Hampshire company that had owned it for 12 years. "I feel this was a wise investment for all the residents. Now they own a stake in their community," the former manager said. "We wish them well!"

The deal took nearly a year of hard work by the co-op's leadership team. When they incorporated in February, it was not completely certain the park would go up for sale.

But their positive momentum carried them through. Co-op vice president Phyllis Aldrich says, "We were happy to have the chance to grow, from just being renters without any say in the place we call home to being members in a community, where you have a say in what the future holds."

CDI will continue to provide financial, management and organizational technical assistance to the new co-op. Full financing for the project was provided by ROC USA Capital, a national Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). The national organization was built on the very successful ROC program developed in NH by the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund.

COMMUNITY CENTER/  
RESIDENTIAL CO-OP  
INTENTIONAL/SUSTAINABLE  
COMMUNITY  
SHARED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES  
CO-OP  
LOW-INCOME HOUSING CO-OP

#### NEW HAMPSHIRE

FAMILY-OWNED FARM CONVERSION  
PURCHASING CO-OP  
FISHERMENS' ALLIANCE  
SMALL FARMERS FARM  
EQUIPMENT CO-OP  
LOCAL FOOD CO-OP

#### NEW YORK

3 FOOD CO-OPS, 1 BUYING CLUB  
2 AGRICULTURAL CO-OPS  
2 CONSUMER 'GREEN' ENERGY  
CO-OPS  
'GREEN' ENERGY PRODUCERS  
WORKING GROUP  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT  
INITIATIVE  
2 RETREAT CENTERS  
EQUIPMENT SHARING CO-OP  
AQUACULTURE CO-OP  
MULTISTAKEHOLDER FOOD  
PRODUCTION CO-OP  
LAND BANK CO-OP

#### RHODE ISLAND

MARKETING/DISPATCH SHARED  
SERVICES CO-OP  
SEAFOOD CO-OP

#### VERMONT

AGRITOURSIM CO-OP  
2 FOOD CO-OPS (1 START-UP)  
CONSULTING GROUP  
IMMIGRANT RESIDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION  
WORKER-OWNED TEA ROOM  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
NONPROFIT

## Seeking and Strengthening Local Partnerships

CDI FOCUS: NATURAL RESOURCES

### Narragansett Bay Seafood Co-op

The Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA) works in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine to help families who fish these coastal waters preserve their region's precious natural resources and their way of life. In 2010, they approached CDI for information about our work with Community Supported Fisheries (CSFs).

A group in the Bristol area of Rhode Island, many of them sons and grandsons of fishermen, own and operate modest, multi-species fishing boats in Narragansett Bay. They catch clams, lobsters, snails and groundfish. Like small farmers raising a diverse harvest, the fishermen need to know a lot and have many skills.

At the request of NAMA, CDI helped the group incorporate as Narragansett Bay Seafood Cooperative. They will work with a local seafood dealer to process, pack and distribute their catch as a branded product, and develop direct sales to consumers through local networks such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members or Farmers Markets, as well as wholesale accounts.

We assisted the fishermen with the creation of the cooperative, including contract negotiations, organization and incorporation, and business planning. NAMA Director Niaz Dorry says, "CDI brought an essential piece of the puzzle to the table for the fishermen and fishing communities...[who] found the information highly useful."



Photo: Hannah Mellon, Farm Fresh RI

The Narragansett co-op is part of a regional initiative for small-scale, multi-species fishermen being conducted by the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance ([www.namanet.org](http://www.namanet.org)).

CDI FOCUS: INFRASTRUCTURE

### Building the Co-op Economy

#### Co-ops Seeding Co-ops

In May 2010, CDI's Noemi Giszpenc conducted a workshop on "Co-ops Seeding Co-ops" at the annual conference of the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) ([www.ncba.coop](http://www.ncba.coop)). This led to invites to repeat the workshop at Vermont's Co-op Summit in October, write an article in NCBA's Cooperative Business Journal (Nov/Dec), and lead a lively webinar, hosted by NCBA in November.

A PowerPoint of her presentation is at: <http://www.cdi.coop/co-opsseedingco-opswebinar.ppt>

#### The Data Commons

Other efforts by CDI to develop a more robust co-op infrastructure include close collaboration on the Data Commons Project (DCP). This US-Canadian initiative supports the creation of a cooperative economy by fostering the growth of accurate data about cooperatives.

CDI is providing management support for the development of this multi-stakeholder worker/consumer cooperative. We sponsor the website ([find.coop](http://find.coop)—under construction). Follow the project's progress at its blog <http://data-commoners.blogspot.com>, and see an introduction, including a video at <http://www.netsquared.org/projects/data-commons-project>.



CDI is active in the US co-op community and a founding member of CooperationWorks! ([www.cooperationworks.coop](http://www.cooperationworks.coop)), a national co-op of development practitioners and centers similar to CDI. At CWI's 2010 Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, members paused in a hectic schedule for a photo op. CDI's Noémi Giszpenc is on second row, 3rd from left.

willcoopfiesta.com  
Co-opARTive Fiesta  
A Creatively Artistic Experience

With all this joyful energy in one place at one time, who knows what will emerge?

The Cooperative Hub presents  
**CO-OP ART FIESTA**  
October 9, 2010  
Downtown Willimantic  
11 am performances into the evening  
Rain Date October 10, 2010

The Boudoir, Boudoir! Rejuvenation  
Puppetry • Outdoor Art • CELEBRATION  
Folk Art • Music Art • Preswirl Gallery  
Food & Beverages • Dancing

Co-op Cafe chat sessions at the Fiesta with workers who own their co-op businesses.  
Let them tell you how to make your dreams come true.

Prose Art • Fine Art • Culinary Art  
Urban Art • Children's Art Activities  
Juried Art Show • Sidewalk Chalk  
The Figurehead Experiment Slicker Expo  
Art Attack • Young Artists Showcase

CDI received a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant in 2010 to work with Connecticut co-ops on a training and mentoring program, to pool resources, share knowledge and help one another increase their capacity to develop a cooperative economy.

In October, grant partner Willimantic Inter-Cooperative Zone and co-op allies from around the Northeast held a series of 'Co-op Cafe' chats at a street festival CDI helped produce. The program listed artists, shows, galleries, performers and cooperators, including co-op sponsors such as Cabot Creamery, Collective Copies, Co-op Fund of New England and 13 food co-ops in the region.

Matt Turpin of Steampunk Cafe, which is taking part in the CT RBEG initiative, attended. "The latest, and a most helpful event, was the Fiesta," he says. "I met a café co-op owner from Maine who'd done the same thing I'm doing. The real-life facts were great. They made me more realistic. I met a ton of people there. Now the café is in the homestretch toward opening."

Mary Hoyer, longtime CDI colleague and Outreach Coordinator for the Cooperative Fund of New England ([www.coopfund.coop](http://www.coopfund.coop)) notes, "CDI is making an extraordinary effort...in Connecticut, which should make a significant contribution to that state [and which] should be replicable in other states throughout New England."

## CDI: 2010 At a Glance

Where we work: New England and New York  
Directors: 8  
Staff: 5  
Maximum hits in a day to [www.cdi.coop](http://www.cdi.coop): 90  
Inquiries re co-op development responded to: 93  
Groups with 20-hr. consult: 20 (100% of target)  
Groups with 40-hr. T.A.: 25 (100% of target)  
Trainings & educational events: 18  
Professional webinars: 3  
Co-ops incorporated: 6  
Jobs created: 3

Jobs preserved: 19  
Units of affordable co-op housing preserved: 336  
Client ratings of CDI services: 8.46 (1–10 scale)  
Clients' likelihood to recommend CDI: 9.19 (1–10 scale)

**SINCE 2005:**  
% of start-ups launched 3 yrs after CDI's help: 87%  
% of start-ups profitable 4 yrs after launch: 40%

## Breaking News

December, 2010 saw the launch of [Cultivate.coop](http://www.cultivate.coop) [[www.cultivate.coop](http://www.cultivate.coop)] another effort in which CDI has closely collaborated. The group is building an online 'hub' for pooling knowledge and resources that pertain to cooperatives. It is a space to collect free information and contribute it, where people can build useful educational tools for the co-op community. What a hopeful way to enter 2011!