

IYC is about promoting your own co-op or credit union, as much as it is about promoting the larger co-operative movement. Every time you include a mention of the International Year in relationship to your own co-op, it adds to the public's awareness of both you and the larger movement.

Throughout 2011, On Co-op's e-Newsletter included easy and inexpensive ideas that you and your co-op or credit union could use to start IYC 2012 initiatives. This list is based on those suggestions.

Check out #13: Perhaps the easiest thing to do is just incorporate IYC into things you're already doing. Your organization already does many activities throughout the year, just add IYC to the mix.

1. Post the **seven co-op principles** in your lunch room. Discuss one each month during a staff meeting.
2. **Buy something** from just ONE more co-op this month. It could be fair trade organic coffee for your lunch room, organic cotton for your company uniforms, or consulting services for strategic planning or board training. You could even put some money in a term deposit in your local credit union.
TIP: A searchable list of all Ontario co-ops, credit unions and caisse populaires is at www.ontario.coop/find_a_coop
3. **Meet with your MPP** to discuss the benefits your co-op brings to your community. Give him/her a crash 'Co-ops 101' course and highlight the contributions of your own organization.
4. **Purchase IYC flags**, magnets, trinkets, signs, roll up banners, etc from www.canada2012.coop. (A bulk purchase deal is in place for Ontario co-ops and credit unions that order by January 27, 2012.)
5. Make IYC a board agenda item. Have your board of directors brainstorm the ways your organization can utilize the power of the International Year to help meet your co-op's plans and objectives.
6. Make a **donation to a co-op foundation** such as the Co-operative Development Foundation or the Ontario Credit Union Charitable Foundation. Consider starting a fund to support community projects or youth leadership -- the Ontario Credit Union Charitable Foundation can host it for you.
7. Spread knowledge of the model by including **interesting co-op facts** in your communications with members and customers. We've developed a single-sided 'Co-ops Work' facts and stats sheet with space on the other side for you to place your own message on. Download from <http://s.coop/coopstats>
8. Consider ways that you might incorporate the sixth principle, Co-operation among Co-operatives, by partnering with, offering discounts to, or otherwise **supporting other co-ops** around you.
9. **Incorporate the IYC slogan**, "Co-operative enterprises build a better world," (or "credit unions build...") into your newsletters, your emails, point of sales items, advertising and any other way your co-op communicates with your members, your staff and the outside community.
10. To help spread the word about co-ops helping communities, **hold a fundraiser** with the goal of raising \$2012 for a local charity.
11. Create a co-op committee, network or informal IYC group and **invite all of the co-ops in your city**, town or region. Meet to discuss ways that you can collaborate on an IYC project for your area. For example a fundraiser, a parade float, an ad in the newspaper, a home show booth, or a wine and cheese event.
12. Include the IYC slogan ("Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World") as part of your organization's **email autosignature**. Include the IYC logo or tagline in all of your PowerPoint presentations and external communications (copies can be downloaded from the On Co-op website or <http://s.coop/ontarioiyc>)
13. Theme a co-op event or meeting, such as your **AGM**, around the IYC slogan.
14. **Dream big!** Wouldn't it be great to see your co-op's name (and the IYC logo) on a billboard, draped over a bus, on a stadium sign, on t-shirts, tattoos, or painted onto the side of a building as a mural in your community? An IYC flag on each of your locations? Start some blue sky discussions at your next staff or board meeting. If you can't finance it all yourself, work with your neighbouring co-ops!

15. **Talk to your mayor**, city council and business improvement area about the financial and social impacts that your co-op brings to the community. Have your city council pass a resolution supporting IYC 2012.
16. Can't afford to host an IYC activity? On Co-op has **IYC subsidy/rebate program** that could help you offset some of your IYC costs. Check out the details posted to <http://s.coop/ontarioIYC>.
17. Create a **profile** of your co-operative: Describe your membership, your function and the different ways your organization contributes to your community. Send it to your local media outlets, city hall, chamber of commerce and your MP/MPP. (If you co-ordinate your efforts with other co-ops in your area, you will vastly increase your exposure and presence!) Consider placing an advertorial in your the local newspaper.
18. Offer to **speak about your co-op** at a local school, community club or business networking association. Talk about your projects, your contributions to your community, IYC, etc. Send a media release to your local media about your efforts, IYC and your presentations!
19. Distribute a series of **Co-ops 101 informational pieces** to your staff, board and others within your organization. They can be your informal IYC and co-op ambassadors. You don't need to start from scratch. Check the On Co-op, CCA and other co-op federation websites for material.
20. Drop into your local **chamber of commerce** or business enterprise centre and leave some brochures and business cards with the staff. Take a few minutes and chat with them about your organization. Consider joining your local chamber or business association.
21. Drum up interest in the International Year using **social media**. Post interesting links about co-operatives and IYC on your personal and work social media sites. Subscribe to the On Co-op page <http://www.facebook.com/oncoop>.
22. Start an International Year committee within your own co-op or credit union. Or post a flyer on the wall of your co-op asking members and employees to submit ideas on celebrating IYC 2012, and using the international year to **promote your organization**.
23. When using **Twitter**, remember to include @ontariocoops, #coops and #IYC2012 in your tweets. (Feel free to retweet any On Co-op, ICA or CCA material.) Join our feed at <http://twitter.com/ontariocoops>
24. Make a donation based on 20.12 to a local charity, or have your staff/board **volunteer** their time. Meet with the group personally, take lots of photos and submit a press release to your local media and On Co-op.
25. **Tell two people**, outside of your normal co-op contacts, about your role in the co-operative sector.
26. Post a list of **your co-op's successes** according to the Co-operative Principles.
27. During Co-op Week (Oct 14-20, 2012) or a significant event in your co-ops calendar, **change your social media profile picture to the IYC logo**. Download the logo file from the On Co-op website.
28. Apply to your **municipality** to have co-ops recognized by your local government on the International Day of Co-operatives (Saturday July 7, 2012) or other key date. Have a flag raising ceremony or proclamation made.
29. Join the **IYC Ontario task force** (in person or via teleconference).
30. Download talking points, media releases, PowerPoint templates, proclamations, resolutions, etc at no charge from www.canada2012.coop.
31. Beyond all else, **Have fun with IYC**. If every one of Ontario's 1,300 co-ops and credit unions organizes just ONE International Year event over the next 12 months, the Year will be a resounding success. Plus, it's easy to include a mention of the International Year in your existing marketing materials and/or include the logo or tag line.

With 1 billion people in 90 countries world wide celebrating the International Year, this can be one heck of a marketing opportunity for your organization and the co-operative movement.

WHAT WILL YOUR COMMUNITY KNOW ABOUT YOUR CO-OP ON JANUARY 1, 2013?

