



# Communiqué

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For Immediate Release  
Contact: Julie Breuer  
Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada  
[julie.breuer@coopscanada.coop](mailto:julie.breuer@coopscanada.coop)

## CDF Campaign invites you to *Be the Change*

OTTAWA - Imagine if you could change the world. The Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF) has taken a step to do just that with the launch of its *Be the Change* campaign to support the development of women leaders around the world.

"Influencing change in the world isn't an impossible task," says campaign chair Heather McLachlin, Vice President Business Development & Partnerships with the CUMIS Group Ltd. "Not if you start with a single action. This is a Campaign to raise funds for and awareness about women in leadership positions and the many challenges that they face."

The *Be the Change* campaign is a joint project of CDF, the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU).

Ms. McLachlin says that monies raised through *Be the Change* will support CCA's international development work with women in programs like the Centre for Micro-Finance in Nepal, which strengthens and empowers women-led savings and credit co-operatives to improve their services, or the Felt Workers Co-operative in Mongolia which creates jobs, skills, and much needed income for rural women and their families. Donations will also support CCA's popular Women's Mentoring Program which enables women credit union managers in developing nations to visit Canadian credit unions.

Ms. McLachlin says women members of the global co-operative and credit union movement are making a real difference in the economic health of communities that were once without hope. But they need help.

"Women are leading their families out of economic desolation but to become leaders they must overcome isolation, discrimination and barriers to education and training.

These women don't need a handout. They don't want charity. They just need the opportunity to learn from their peers and colleagues in the movement. The *Be the Change* campaign provides this opportunity."

Donations to the *Be the Change* campaign will also enable women credit union CEOs from 10 developing countries to participate in the first Global Women's Leadership Forum on July 30<sup>th</sup> in Barcelona, coinciding with WOCCU's World Credit Union Conference. The forum is designed to tap the leadership experience of women credit union CEOs and executive team members, retired women credit union executives, women credit union volunteers and women executives of credit union partner organizations.

Women leaders from Afghanistan, Belarus, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Macedonia, Mexico, Philippines and Sri Lanka have confirmed their participation in the forum.

The campaign has raised nearly \$30,000 in Canada since its launch on International Women's Day.

"History is filled with people who took that first step to make the world a better place," says Ms. McLachlin. "Please join CUMIS and give generously. You can be the change we all wish to see in the world."

For more information on the *Be the Change* campaign please contact Julie Breuer, Manager, CDF at [julie.breuer@coopscanada.coop](mailto:julie.breuer@coopscanada.coop) or visit [www.cdfcanada.coop/bethechange](http://www.cdfcanada.coop/bethechange).

The Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada is a nationally registered charity and the fundraising arm of the Canadian Co-operative Association.

The Canadian Co-operative Association is a national organization for co-operatives and credit unions providing leadership to promote, develop and unite co-operatives and credit unions in Canada and around the world.

The *Be the Change* campaign committee includes: Cheryl Byrne (Credit Union Central of Canada and CUSOURCE Credit Union Knowledge Network), Kimberley Ney (Alternia Savings and Credit Union), Patrice Pratt (Vancity Credit Union), Penny Reeves (AlbertaCentral), and Gail Stepanik-Keber (Servus Credit Union).