

**Women's Economic Council**  
**Annual Report**  
**2012**





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## Message from the President

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### Why Women-Centred CED?

Since WEC was founded in 2002, our central goal has been to speak loudly and clearly about the importance of strengthening, expanding and promoting women-centred Community Economic Development in all its many forms. That is because we know economic and social strategies that embrace the realities of women's experience and expertise have the power to create profound changes in the lives of women, their families and their communities.

The Women's Economic Council (WEC) is a national non-profit organization with charitable status. The Directors who serve with me on the Board of WEC share a passionate commitment to support women on their journeys toward economic security. We represent a cross-section of Canada geographically and the knowledge of our regions enriches our planning and our perspective. We also bring our diverse backgrounds and experience to the Board table which enlivens our conversations and helps us to make informed decisions.

Our three-year project now underway, Empowering Women's Enterprises and Networks is a perfect example of how WEC supports women-centred CED across the country. Our four Cluster Tables are evolving uniquely across the range of community economic development options: planning for community sustainability, ensuring access to capital for entrepreneurs, building stronger organizations, and establishing collaborative marketing platforms for social enterprises. And always women are at the heart of the Tables, designing their activities to capitalize on their strengths and resources, and creating new ways to work together and support each other.

We also recognize the barriers women face in achieving their goals and we will continue to advocate for changes that would increase the quality of life for all women and their families.

We appreciate the support we receive for our work from our funders, Status of Women Canada and the Canadian Women's Foundation. We are also appreciative of our staff for their expertise, commitment and enthusiasm:

Patricia Baxter, our Executive Director; Cathy Dennis, our Administrative Assistant and Jessica Hill, the National Coordinator of our Cluster Table project; Denise McLean, our National Evaluator and Bonnie Mitchell, our Bookkeeper. What a great group! Their wonderful work is the foundation of WEC's successful implementation of our mandate.

It is a pleasure to sit at the Board table, another cluster of sharing and building for the future. We were sorry to say good-bye to Board member, Tine Buechler this year and wish her well. One of the key priorities for the WEC Board in the coming year is Board recruitment.

We look back on the year with pride and look forward to exciting discoveries and achievements in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Valerie Carruthers".

Valerie Carruthers  
President



## Message from the Executive Director

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The Women's Economic Council (WEC) has been very busy developing and supporting our cluster project Empowering Women's Enterprises and Networks.

I am proud of WEC's accomplishments and look forward to our future in supporting women-led Community Economic Development in Canada. This is the year of partnership were WEC worked hard to facilitate and support women-led CED enterprises. Our team has grown with the addition of a National Project Manager and Evaluation Consultant to support project requirements.

WEC worked hard during 2012 with the innovation of its new Clustering project that would see pilots established in four locations in Canada. The project, with the support of host partners (of women-led organizations), will recruit women business leaders and others to mentor and guide women-led organizations and women entrepreneurs into CED initiatives and or business. Through this project development, WEC has worked extensively and networked with many women-led organizations, other CED groups and has worked in partnership with groups such as the Canadian Women's Foundation and The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet). These relationships have created momentum towards more direct work with women-led CED and its development. WEC will also continue to work very closely with Immigrant and Aboriginal women's groups to help address the inequities and barriers to economic security they experience.

WEC continues to work with the Canadian Women's Foundation by working with their economic development committee and by advocating on behalf of women and their aspirations towards CED. Some of our advocacy included meeting with government officials, writing letters of support for other women's groups, and attending CED events to contribute the gender perspective. We have had input into a SWC review of program process influencing potentially, project tools and criteria in the future programs.

The WEC Board of Directors continues to be a tremendous support by volunteering their time and resources to support the WEC mandate. They have been committed to supporting staff and working efficiently through conference calls and one on one support as required by the national office.

Through Board participation WEC has had presence at CED national events bringing forward the gender perspective.

WEC is fortunate to have the commitment and work of Cathy Dennis Executive Assistant, Jessica Hill, National Project Manager, Dr. Denise McLean as contracted National Evaluator and Bonnie Mitchell Bookkeeper. Their combined expertise, commitment to WEC and diligence makes this organization work! WEC will build on past achievements and continue to grow towards our vision of Economic Security for Every Woman.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Baxter', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patricia Baxter  
Executive Director



# Board of Directors and Staff

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## Executive Committee

<b>Valerie Carruthers</b>	President
<b>Gulalai Habib</b>	Secretary
<b>Rosalind Lockyer</b>	Treasurer and founding member

## Directors

<b>Melanie Conn</b>	Director and founding member
<b>Roberta Hewson</b>	Director

## Staff

<b>Patricia Baxter</b>	Executive Director
<b>Cathy Dennis</b>	Executive Assistant
<b>Jessica Hill</b>	National Project Manager
<b>Dr. Denise McLean</b>	National Evaluator (Contract)
<b>Bonnie Mitchell</b>	Bookkeeper



# WEC Statements

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## Vision

Economic security for every woman

## Mission

Advancing women-centred CED to improve the lives of women, their families and communities

## Action

The Council strengthens the women-centred CED sector and organizations through information-sharing and technical assistance.

The Council helps to provide a national voice for women-centred CED to increase awareness of the effectiveness of holistic women-centred CED.

The Council raises public awareness about policy changes necessary to support women's economic security.

The Council researches and documents issues, trends and outcomes of the diversity and spectrum of women-centred CED.

## Mandate

Women's Economic Council is a national charitable organization of women-centred community economic development organizations and practitioners.

Community Economic Development (CED) is local economic development that is focused on people, employment, self-employment, inclusion and sustainability. Its goal is to provide meaningful work for all, at a level of income that provides a secure livelihood, in jobs that are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.



Women-centred CED adapts the CED framework to accomplish changes for women. It starts with women's lives and challenges deeper and more systemic elements of economic and social equality in a practical way, working with women at the grass roots level and building a foundation to increase women's economic security and independence. It is built on a foundation of empowerment and offers a holistic, long term approach to development.

It includes training and skills development, co-operatives, small business development supports, social purpose enterprise, micro-lending, and much more.

The Council works to represent women who can benefit from CED as a means to break the cycle of poverty improve the lives of their families and communities, including:

- Women who are exploited in their work – unpaid and underpaid
- Women who have experienced domestic violence
- Women with disabilities
- Women experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Women in or at risk of persistent poverty
- Aboriginal women
- Immigrant and refugee women
- Visible Minority women
- Women experiencing mental illness as a barrier to work

The realities of intersecting oppressions mean that many women experience complex and multi-faceted economic, social and political exclusion. The Council respects and supports the many routes women take to overcome multiple oppressions, and we stand in solidarity with all women as we work toward women's equity, equality and economic security.

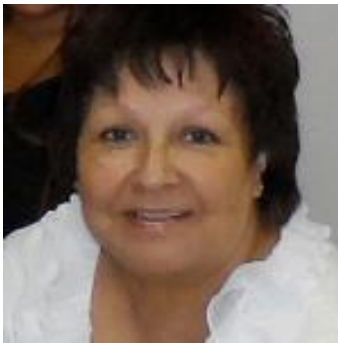


## Projects and Action Summaries

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### Empowering Women's Enterprises and Networks: A Cluster Project

Commencing in February of 2012, Empowering Women's Enterprises and Networks is a unique national clustering project that brings together women from many different segments of the Canadian population (Immigrant, Aboriginal, mainstream), empowering them to build their enterprises, professional networks, capacities and opportunities for long term sustainability and economic security.



National Project Manager Jessica Hill began working with WEC in February.

#### Partner and Stakeholder Engagement

Four women-led organizations became regional Host Partners with WEC forming the 'cluster site tables' across Canada:



WISE Women in Newfoundland  
[www.wiseprograms.com](http://www.wiseprograms.com)



PARO in Thunder Bay, Ontario  
[www.paro.ca](http://www.paro.ca)



NEWC in Winnipeg, Manitoba  
[www.newcentre.org](http://www.newcentre.org)



Common Thread in Vancouver, British Columbia  
[www.commonthreadcoop.ca](http://www.commonthreadcoop.ca)

Organization and community orientation took place at each Cluster Site. The diversity in mission, CED capacity, funding stability and staff dedicated to the project represents a good cross-section of women in Canada, the non-profit organizations that serve them and how development might occur in a real time setting.

There are limited, national and regional resources available in Canada to support CED initiatives which means building a foundation and working to develop business ideas, leadership and capacity for individual and group growth is a slow task.

## **Training**

Each Cluster site has provided training, skill development and information to women integrating the 5 asset areas, personal, human, social, physical and financial of the Sustainable Livelihoods Model into their programming. Training is based on participant training needs which are identified through discussion, mapping skills and needs. The NPM also participates in distance learning and promotes Cluster development to Cluster participants.

Based upon input from Clusters, two 1.5 hour CED 101 webinars are in development, one focussed on 'The Economics of CED' and the other on 'Community Development and CED'. In addition, a Sustainable Livelihoods Model workshop is being developed to help build capacity. A Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) tool is available for organizations to use to evaluate outside programs and those they develop to ensure programs we use or promote consider key factors in women's lives and if there are gaps that these impacts are examined. A communication strategy and tool was provided to Clusters as we begin to take our messages public.

## Cluster Site Implementation

Cluster Sites utilize standardized work plan templates and Interim Assessment Reports to ensure compliance with funding criteria and these are revised annually. Knowledge and information sharing both private and public occurs at the individual participant and Cluster or WEC national levels. Regular bi-monthly conference calls are scheduled and yearly visits occurs when WEC training and group facilitation is carried out.



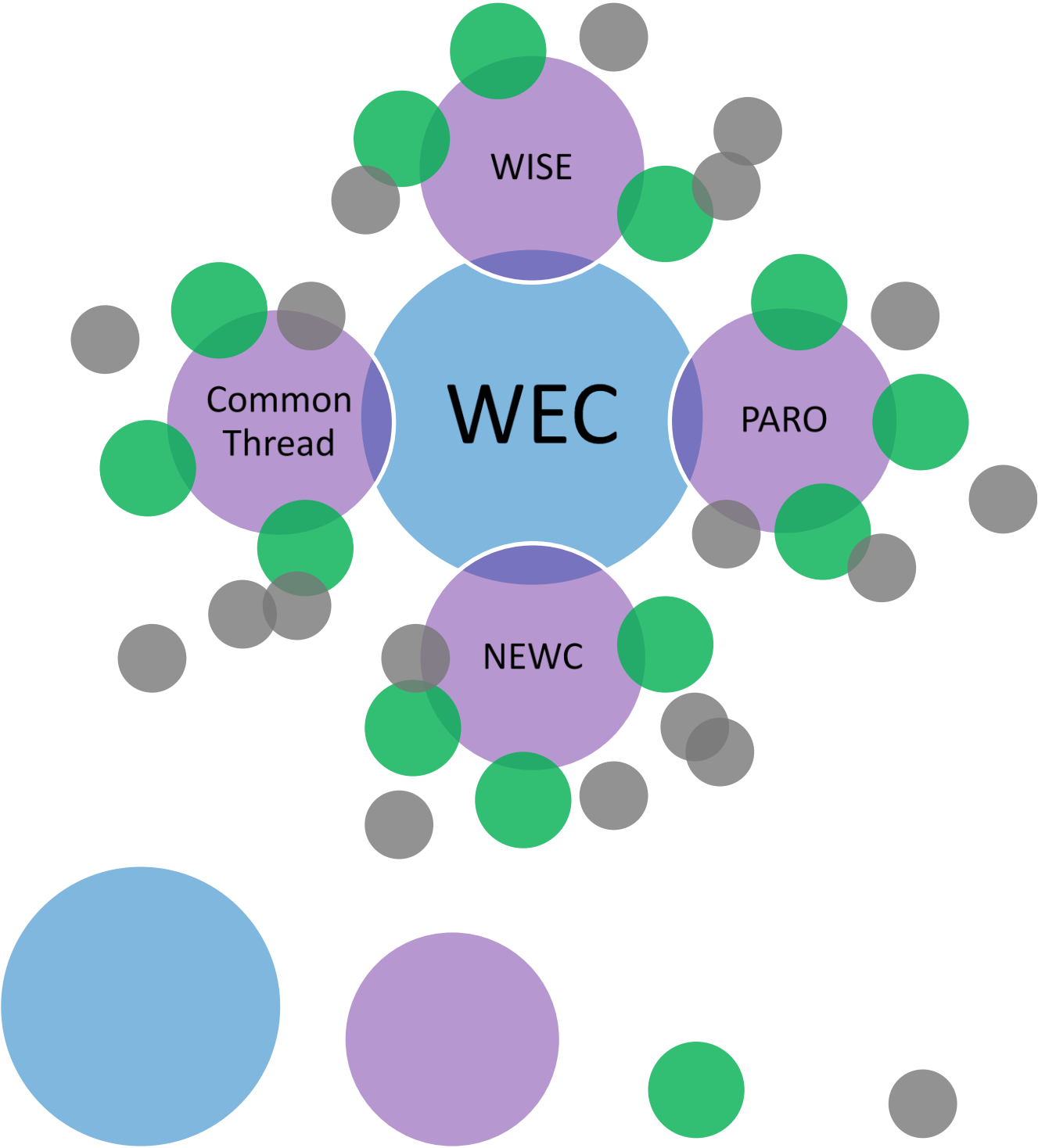
In October, the lead hosts from each Cluster Site had their first in-person meeting in Winnipeg, MB.

## Evaluation

A national evaluator, Denise McLean, was hired to develop an evaluation framework using the Sustainable Livelihoods Model to help collect, understand and demonstrate the outcomes of the WEC Cluster Project. Every six months this data is summarized into internal reports for WEC collective review and discussion and input into reports. In the spring of 2015 this information will be summarized into a report for SWC.



# Clustering Project Model



National Partner

Host Partners

Mentors/Leaders

Clients/Participant:

(‘Stakeholders’ may be added as additional funding/leverage is acquired)

## Other Project Development

WEC worked hard with potential funding agencies, both in the private and public sectors. Project proposals and briefings to ask for capacity support and volunteers from the following groups.

- Bank of Montreal
- Royal Bank of Canada
- Ricki's
- HRSDC
- The Cooperators

As a result WEC has secured volunteer support toward the Cluster project from RBC. Other proposals are still in consideration for action.

## Policy and Advocacy

The Canadian Women's Foundation supported WEC's work towards impacting women's policy and advocacy in CED. Their support allowed the WEC Board of Directors to meet regularly with women-led CED organizations and brief others on our work and determine if there was partnership potential. Additional activities include the following:

- Participation on the Economic Development Committee with CWF – this included analysing project proposals, providing advice and providing educational information on Aboriginal groups, collaborating on the establishment of an emerging women leadership training institution.
- Continued membership with the Common Thread Co-op (a social enterprise/Co-op) in Vancouver
- Revision and update of the WEC website
- Worked with several women-led organizations in their efforts towards CED and/or financial literacy support
- Participation at one national conference sponsored by CCEDNet (Toronto)
- Board member participated with CCEDNet on the Peopled Centre Economy Committee and Chaired the Public Policy Council ( CCEDNet Nationally)
- Collaborated with CCEDNet and CESO on funding proposals

## Future Projects

For the future WEC plans on continuing the path towards capacity building, resource and tools that will support women-led organizations and women directly on their journey towards economic security. We are exploring some exciting opportunities that will use technology and ensure that we keeping abreast the best ways to offering our services and accessing our resources.

## Governance and Operations

The WEC Board of Directors continued to work on strengthening internal governance policies, including operational procedures to support good governance practices and diligence. The Board of Director's is developing a Board Succession Planning and a process for recruiting new members.

## Action and Networking

The Board of Directors for WEC met once in person in 2012 in Winnipeg.

In 2012 sessions were held with the following:

- Status of Women Canada
- North End Women's Resource Centre
- CESO
- Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs – Ontario
- Ontario Women's Directorate
- CCEDNet Ontario
- Simon Fraser University – CED training
- Canadian Women's Foundation



## Status of Women Canada



**Status of Women  
Canada**

**Condition féminine  
Canada**

## Canadian Women's Foundation



WEC is grateful to work with these funders as women move towards economic security.

Thank you for your support and guidance as we continue our work.

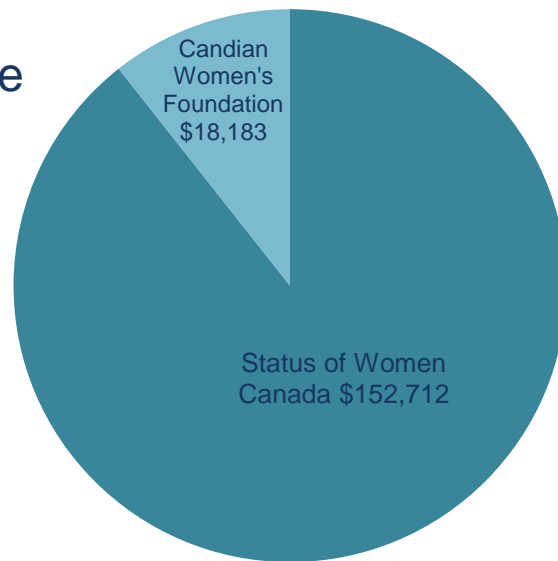




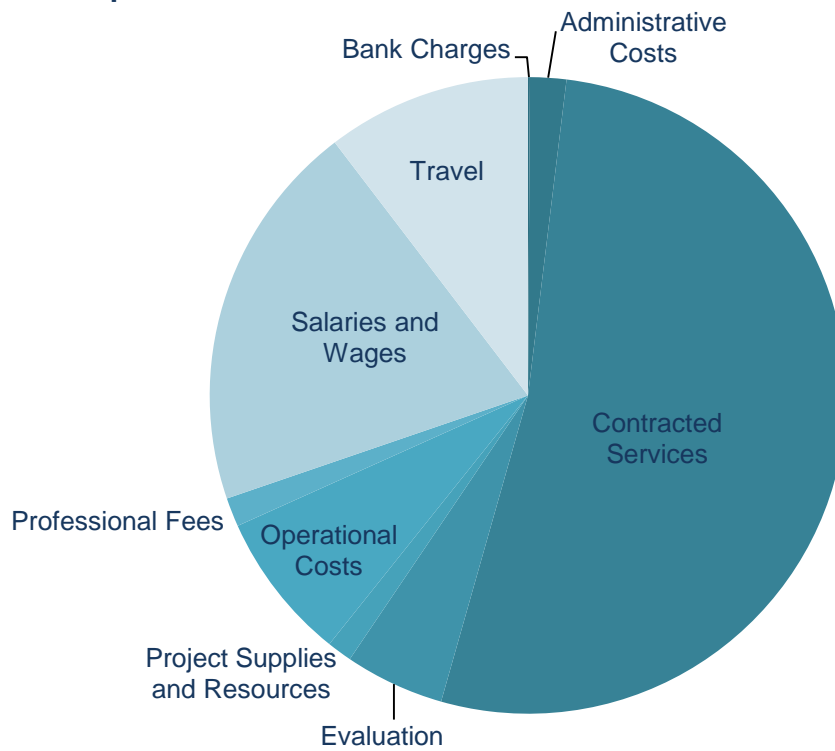
# 2012 Financial Summary

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## 2012 Revenue



## 2012 Expenses





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L2M 7W7  
905-395-5171

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[www.womenseconomiccouncil.ca](http://www.womenseconomiccouncil.ca)

Empowering Women To Build Sustainable Communities

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Renforcer l'autonomie des femmes pour bâtir des communautés durables