

Alterna Savings participates in Canadian Co-operative Association's Women's Mentorship Program

Ottawa, May 11, 2012 - For the past 10 years more than 200 Canadian credit unions and 150 women from the developing world's credit unions have participated in the Canadian Co-operative Association's Women's Mentoring Program.

Last week Alterna proudly welcomed Gertrude Tashobya, who manages a savings and credit co-operative (SACCO) in Uganda. While with Alterna she will spend time at their Ottawa locations where she will work alongside staff as they share their skills and knowledge. Alterna employee, Christine Racine, is a second time participant in the program and will host Gertrude in her home for the duration of her time with Alterna. "Serving as a host for this program is one of the most gratifying experiences I have lived - it is a true learning experience for my whole family. We have the unique pleasure of learning about another culture from the comfort of our own home," says Christine.

As one of 14 women participating in the mentoring program this year, Gertrude hopes to learn leadership skills in risk management so that she can effectively manage her credit union and ensure that service to members is efficient and reliable.

The mentoring program engages Canadian credit union staff in a learning opportunity which supports the sixth co-operative principle – "Co-operation among co-operatives". They learn first-hand about the challenges credit union staff face in under developed countries and share their skills and knowledge. In this, the 2012 International Year of Co-operatives, the women's mentoring program is a perfect example of why co-operatives are so important in the global economy, says Laurie Tennian, Canadian Co-operative Association's Women's Mentoring Program Manager. "Whether you are in Ottawa or Uganda, the co-operative principles are the same. The mentoring program really drives that home and I think our Canadian and international partners recognize that the same principles and values are the foundation of the growth and success of our co-operatives."

The mentoring program includes two weeks of training in Ottawa, before the women are placed in credit unions across the country. After their placements, they return to Ottawa for a week of review and reflection. To learn more about the program and its past participants, go to [http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/international_dev/CCA International Programs/Women-Mentorship-Program](http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/international_dev/CCA_International_Programs/Women-Mentorship-Program)

For more information about the mentoring program, please contact Laurie Tennian, Canadian Co-operative Association, laurie.tennian@coopscanada.coop

Alterna Savings is a full-service, member-focused, and community-based credit union that operates in the National Capital Region and the Greater Toronto Area. Guided by a commitment to support the well-being of members, employees and communities, Alterna offers a broad range of financial products and services to over 100,000 members. Learn about the Alterna Savings difference at www.alterna.ca