

# CHF CANADA VISION SUMMIT

DAY TWO OPENING REMARKS BY KYLE TAYLOR

Hello everyone and welcome back to day two!

I have never been to a conference like this. Coming up to the beginning of the conference, I had been very excited, hopeful, and having many imaginary conversations with imaginary delegates on our ideals, our visioning process, and the beautiful utopian future we were all about to create, and the myriad of social ills we were about to solve in a single weekend of enthusiastic participation in a magical process called "Visioning".

And then I got here, stressed a lot about the clothes I got from Value Village, and the process started. And I was skeptical. Something as magical as visioning isn't supposed to feel this uncomfortable. We had to express ourselves within acronyms, we had to express ourselves in front of strangers. We had to actively disagree. We had to awkwardly decide how this workgroup could collaborate and who was going to write it all down. We had to interpret (and even translate) each other's words and languages. It was awkward, frustrating and clumsy. Not magical.

And then something unexpected to emerged, something that slowly began to soften that skepticism. I heard people agreeing. I saw the same words being reflected on the many pages posted up on the walls, and when we sat down to discuss them, I started to get sense of what our common values and vision really are, and what it means to me and to others to be part of the co-operative movement.

Our excitement and passion for growth and expansion is not just about more houses for more people in more places. It is about the growth and expansion of identity, security, autonomy, and social equity in more houses for more people in more places. It's not just about growth and expansion at any cost, but strong, healthy development that to us is not only an economic activity, but a social activity.

To me it is an incredible privilege to be here with all of you discussing my housing and the housing needs of others, and an incredible privilege that I can soon return to a home that is affordable, safe, secure, and where I have agency, dignity, and a “say”. I think our stated desire for growth as a sector is the recognition of the value that these qualities bring to all our members’ lives, but also the awareness that they are indeed a privilege and not accessible to others (everyone?)

So as I head into another day that is sure to be filled with excitement, uncomfortable moments, enthusiastic agreements and just as enthusiastic disagreements, I will remind myself that the strength of our vision is not diminished by dissent, disagreement, or a diversity of perspectives and opinions. These points of tension or difference are exactly where as a group of delegates representing federations of co-operatives, and federations of federations should be, we need to be vocal, respectful, compassionate, and assertive. A vision framework that includes growth must by definition be about inclusion and diversity, and finding the common values and threads we share; without including new voices, we will not grow.

So as of now, I am putting aside any hope that this will be a magical experience; I am encouraging myself to suspend the belief that awkwardness is bad, that this was going to be only fun and easy, and instead to believe that for today, the more uncomfortable or unfamiliar this feels, perhaps the better we are doing.

Kyle Taylor

