Cooperative Spring: A CoopYouth Toolkit

Welcome to the online version of Cooperative Spring: A CoopYouth Toolkit!

If you already know where you want to go, you can navigate to a specific section using the navigation pane to the left or selecting "next page" at the bottom left of the page.

If you don't yet know where you want to start, check out the Introduction: What It Is & How To Use It to get oriented.

Please note that, over the next few weeks, formatting will be improved to allow for better readability (e.g. lists of data converted to tables), some minor edits will be made, and in text hyperlinks will be added throughout the toolkit to make navigation easier. If you notice any errors or have any feedback, please reach out directly to emily@ahoy.coop.

In solidarity and care - Youth Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance

Introduction: What It Is & How To Use It

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- HOW TO USE IT

WHAT IT IS

This toolkit was envisioned by the Global Youth Network of the International Cooperative Alliance. It was formally commissioned as a handful of other coopyouth research projects, outlined in the full “What Came Before” section of this toolkit, were being conducted throughout the Cooperative Movement. That collection of research, while youth were involved, observes the Coopyouth Movement from the outside, by presenting facts and figures describing the movement at-large. *Cooperative Spring: A CoopYouth Toolkit* is distinct from those endeavors in that it is a document about cooperativism and cooperative practice, generally, from the perspective of coopyouth. This toolkit is not a step-by-step guide to start a cooperative, as many of those already exist. Rather, it is a living reference guide for youth cooperators at various stages of cooperative practice, exploring key issues that face youth while starting, maintaining, and developing their cooperatives.

SIGNIFICANCE OF “COOPERATIVE SPRING”

The use of “spring” in the toolkit's title is, first and foremost, a reference to the Arab Spring and other youth-led social movements that affiliated with the Arab Spring during the beginning of the 21st century. The various Springs around the world marked a period of increased global unrest in response to endless war, expanding wealth disparity, racial oppression, climate catastrophe, and nation-state violence. Many of those involved in building the Coopyouth Movement were also participants in Spring actions and resistance activities in their home villages, cities, states, and countries. As a result, the philosophy and practices found in this toolkit represent cooperativism taking action to both build a better world through cooperative development, as well as to cooperate in the necessary task of broad-scale social transformation.

Additionally, “youth” is often considered to be the “spring” season of one’s lifetime. After a winter of childhood in which most are protected and nurtured by family or community structures, the spring of youth marks the time when many are entering into the world for the first time as individuals able to make their own decisions about the course of their lives. Relatedly, this contribution of thought by coopyouth to a more than century long lineage of recorded cooperative philosophy is akin to a spring feeding a waterway. Cooperativism can be well understood as a river - which is simultaneously as old as it is new. It remains dynamic, persists across time and material obstacles, easefully takes in additional flow, and will dry up without a spring source. Ian MacPherson, whose words are included throughout the toolkit, wrote the following - “the rich and diverse traditions of the movement, the subtleties and potential of its philosophies, need to be reconsidered and reapplied by each generation. The sooner young people are involved, the sooner they begin to consider for themselves how the Cooperative Movement should be adjusted for their times, and the better it will be for all” (1998, 252). *Cooperative Spring: A CoopYouth Toolkit* is intended to be a reinvigoration of cooperative thought and practice, ultimately of use to all generations of the Cooperative Movement - past, present, and future.

WHAT’S IN IT

The toolkit consists of two main elements; an exploration ofcooperative philosophy from the coopyouth perspective that draws from existing documents, and an exploration of cooperative practice using information gathered through a year-long series of interviews with coopyouth around the world. More specifically, the opening sections of the toolkit orient the contemporary expression of coopyouth philosophy in a longer lineage of cooperative thought, as well as contextualize it within the spate of recent research on coopyouth -

- a methodology, "How We Did It," explains how the firsthand narrative contributions from

coopyouth were gathered for this toolkit;
- a literature review, "What Came Before," includes a selection of cooperative philosophy from the last century, all known coopyouth reports from this century, and all accessible texts of coopyouth statements issued at various international events over the last decade; and
- a glossary-style breakdown of key definitions and concepts,"Words Mean Things," that together constitute a coopyouth worldview of cooperativism and its application.

The remainder of the toolkit is comprised of eleven separate key issue sections that arise in the course of cooperative practice. Most of the eleven key issues were identified prior to conducting interviews, so were used to shape the questions asked. Four additional issues were evolved during the course of interviews with coopyouth from around the world. The key issues are as follows:

- Structure & Participation
- Member Transition
- Education & Training
- Leadership
- Relationships of Solidarity
- Relationships of Coercion
- Cooperative Development
- Conflict & Crisis
- Capital
- Cooperative Culture
- Social Transformation

Each key issue section is split into three portions, beginning with a general summary of the issue that highlights unique ways in which the issue impacts youth. The solutions and strategies coopyouth employed in the context of those issues and the challenges they may present are included next. In closing, each key issue section briefly discusses two to four other key issues outlined in the toolkit that are correlated with the issue. Throughout these sections, there are many explicit references to other parts of the toolkit, making it easy to navigate the document from any starting point.

HOW TO USE IT

Reading through the cooperative philosophy sections delineated above, first, would provide a solid foundation for approaching the rest of the sections that focus on cooperative practice. Thereafter, each key issue chapter can be read according to each reader's needs and interests. For example, when a cooperative is considering expanding by bringing on new members, they can take time together to read through and discuss relevant sections such as "Membership Transition," "Education & Training," "Cooperative Culture," and "Cooperative Development." Using the issue summaries and example responses from other coopyouth as conversation starters to initiate their expansion process, rather than just getting down to business and drafting public announcements and scheduling interviews, the cooperative is far more likely to approach the process in a way that truly meets their needs and is, following, more assured to be successful.

While hard copies of this toolkit will be made available, its existence as an online resource allows for the document to remain dynamic and for future contributions to be made. Specifically, additional solutions and strategies evolved by coopyouth can be submitted via an online form and incorporated into the toolkit. Over time, this toolkit can serve as a living registry of global coopyouth ingenuity and insight.

Note from the President

For more than a decade, the global CoopYouth Movement has contributed our positions and visions

to the mainstream movement through the creation of assembly spaces, collective statements, direct actions, educational programming, and - our organizational home - the ICA Global Youth Network. We thought it was now time for another step; to share much of what we have collectively learned with the movement at-large. It is a pleasure and a privilege to introduce you to this toolkit. This is the achievement of a great deal of work and reflection within the international CoopYouth Movement this century, and it fairly represents a maturation of our movement and the evolution of cooperative thought.

We designed this toolkit to support any group of youth around the world to be able to create, maintain, or develop a cooperative in a way that effectively addresses the unique issues they face. Those of us involved in coopyouth organizing over the past fifteen years have experienced both the inherent strengths of the cooperative model, in addition to the many philosophical quandaries and practical challenges the application of the model can present. That collective knowledge tacitly shapes this toolkit, though the bulk of its insights comes directly from a globally-representative group of coopyouth that agreed to be interviewed for this toolkit. This toolkit reviews situations youth cooperators may encounter in the scope of cooperative practice, and various methods to respond to given situations in a way that maintains your integrity to the Cooperative Identity and ensures your cooperative's sustainability and success. While the toolkit was written for and by youth, the wisdom it provides is relevant to cooperators of all age, not just coopyouth.

As a global CoopYouth Movement, we see ourselves as a "facilitator" between generations of cooperators - young and old. We want to connect elder cooperators to coopyouth so they understand both our concerns, as well as appreciate all we have innovated within cooperative philosophy and practice; we want to share with them the cooperative tools and knowledge we have developed through years of concerted effort. With regard to concerns, we know the current global economic system is not sustainable, and that a more cooperative system won't happen "by chance" - we must intentionally organize the younger and older generations to transform the current system through the use of the democratically-run, human-centered, and ecologically-sustainable cooperative model. This is not a task we can do alone.

We hope you will receive this toolkit as a peer-to-peer offering from the current generation of the CoopYouth Movement, with the goal to spirit along cooperative philosophy and practice in the present and future from the perspective of youth. To this end, we intend to continue to expand the toolkit and treat it as a living record of coopyouth philosophy and practice. We encourage you to participate in this important documentation work by contributing your own coopyouth insights to be integrated into the toolkit in the future.

In cooperation - Sebastien Chaillou, ICA GYN President (2017-2021)

Note from the Funder

We thank Monique F Leroux and the Cooperative Summit for their considerable support of the Youth Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance and this toolkit. Without their financial contributions, this toolkit and other initiatives of the Youth Committee would likely not have been possible. We hope this support and all that we were able to accomplish with it will serve as an example to all those in the Cooperative Movement what youth can do if they are given the resources they need. Thank you for your solidarity!

During my different mandates as Chair of the Board of the International Cooperative Alliance or as President and Chief Executive Officer of Desjardins Group, I was delighted to discover how much young cooperators have a vibrant passion and a drive for success. What standed out the most is their willingness to do things differently. It truly seems like the cooperation values and principles were made for them.

The entire movement needs to support them in reaching their goals and becoming the next generation of leaders. They surely will have at heart to ensure a social and economic development that is more human, respectful and fair. Our contribution is to create opportunities for them to learn, grow and stand out.

This is exactly what we did when we elaborated the *Young leaders program* for the three editions of the International Summit of Cooperatives. And with the remaining funds of the Summit, we had an even bigger opportunity to create a durable impact by supporting among other projects the Cooperative Spring: A Coop Youth Toolkit made by the ICA Global Youth Network.

On the road towards reaching your dream you will face many challenges, but when you have just the right amount of ambition, boldness and action you will certainly thrive. May this toolkit be one more string to your bow.

Monique F. Leroux

Former Chair of the Board of the International Cooperative Alliance

Acknowledgements

The evolution of the international CoopYouth Movement this century has been an immense effort of many young people. While the work has been and always will be collective, some key individuals have contributed a great deal of their labor and spirit to foster this movement that now has a clear identity, community membership, and philosophy. A few of those especially impactful people, who deserve much acknowledgement and thanks for their work through the years, are as follows:

Gretchen Hacquard

She has provided invaluable institutional memory and guidance, as a young person involved at the first flutterings of international CoopYouth Movement organization and, later, as the first staff person to support the movement's development. Gretchen (Mrs/her) first began working in the cooperative movement in the United States in 2001 when she was a youth. She attended the ICA General Assembly in 2005 as a youth representative for the U.S. cooperative movement. In 2006, she began working at the ICA, and in 2011 was asked to coordinate the ICA Youth Network. She has enjoyed her time working as a youth and for youth in the cooperative movement and has tried to help youth increase their voice during that time.

Gaby Buffa

She was elected president of the Global Youth Network at the Cape Town Assembly and served from 2013 to 2017. During this period, the Network was formally formed, its Rules of Procedure were established, and an Executive Committee made up of representatives from the four regions began to function. Numerous global meetings were held. research on youth participation in cooperatives was collected, and the Network's newsletter was published, which gave voice and dissemination to the concerns and proposals of the youth. Most importantly, she effectively knit together the network by fostering strong and enduring relationships among its organizers. In 2010, she became a member of the Youth Committee of Cooperar, the Cooperative Confederation of the Argentine Republic, where she worked on the integration of youth into the national and regional Cooperative Movements. An educator in practice and at heart, she has worked as a teacher in a cooperative school and is currently a member of Idelcoop (Cooperative Education Foundation). She currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Federation: Instituto Movilizador de Fondos Cooperativos and contributes as a member of the international team of Cooperar together with President Dr. Ariel Guarco.

Sebastien Chaillou-Gillette

He is the Global Youth Network President responsible for commissioning this toolkit, led the international CoopYouth Movement as a key period of exponential development and growth. He first initiated his commitment to the cooperative movement as a co-founder of the first campus cooperative in France. Doing so was a natural progression after almost a decade of organizing work in student unionism, which is a different way to promote and support youth and student self-organization. He became president of his campus cooperative in 2014, and then began work on developing both a national French and a regional European network of young cooperators. Ultimately in 2017, he became president of the International Cooperative Alliance's Youth Committee through the organization's first fully open and accessible election, made possible by a direct, online voting process.

Thank you to Gretchen, Gaby, Sebastien, and all the youth who co-authored CoopYouth Statements, attended Network meetings, created countless documents, connected with one another across language and culture, and make the CoopYouth Movement what it is today. Through your efforts, more youth have been and will be supported in taking on cooperative work and lifestyle, and doing so with integrity and community. In solidarity and care! <3

Methodology

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SUMMARY

To create this toolkit, cooperative wisdom was drawn from a range of sources, past and present, including historical literature, recent research reports, coopyouth statements, and a series of narrative interviews with current coopyouth practitioners around the world. The pre-existing literature and reports were reviewed and included as the "What Came Before" section of the toolkit. The content gathered via longform interviews with individual coopyouth constitutes the bulk of the toolkit's content, found within the eleven Key Issue chapters. Representation of the regions among those interviewed is, unfortunately, not consistent, some reasons for which are outlined later in this section.

INTERVIEWS & SURVEYS

The bulk of this toolkit's primary content was generated via oral interviews with and online surveys completed by representatives from sixteen coopyouth organizations throughout the world. Interviews were conducted and surveys were collected from July of 2020 to May of 2021; respondents were offered compensation of either 10usd or a coopyouth t-shirt to be sent out after the completion of this publication, though several respondents refused compensation.

Representation of the sixteen interviews or surveys is as follows:

REGION

- Africa: 3
- Americas: 5
- Asia-Pacific: 2
- Europe: 5
- Global: 1

TYPE

- Multi-Stakeholder: 3
- Network: 3
- Producer: 1
- User: 2
- Worker: 6

YOUTH STATUS

- Only Youth: 4
- All Youth: 5
- Mostly Youth: 2
- All Ages: 5

AGE OF COOP (YEARS)

- 1-5: 3
- 6-10: 4
- 11-20: 4
- 21+: 4

Interviews and surveys were offered in English, Spanish, and French, though all respondents elected to engage with the process in English. Videochat was the preferred medium for interviews and was used whenever possible. However, in many instances, sufficient internet connection for videochatting was not available, in which cases the interviews moved to phone. Six of those representatives solicited for input elected to submit responses to the interview questions via an online survey. All respondents were asked to provide clarifications and further information via email following the completion of the interview or survey, though some questions were not answered, resulting in a few gaps in information. Interviews ranged from ninety minutes to three hours. While a uniform set of interview questions was the foundation for every interview, opportunities to explore specific topics in more depth or to ask questions about adjacent issues were taken whenever time and interest allowed. As a result, the data collected is primarily qualitative and narrative in nature, which helped to define the storytelling tone used in the Key Issue chapters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To ground the research described above, a literature review, located in the "What Came Before" section of this toolkit, was undertaken in order to orient the coopyouth philosophy and practice revealed in the broader context of existing cooperative philosophy, other coopyouth research endeavors, and coopyouth contributions to the international movement discourse. The literature begins by detailing four research projects and reports on coopyouth by movement institutions (e.g. #coops4dev,[1] CICOPA[2]), in order to connect this research with that pre-existing work, as well as articulate how and why this toolkit is distinct from those existing texts. Second, six foundational philosophical texts are assessed and summarized, including movement canon curated by the ICA (Cooperative Identity, Guidance Notes), as well as commentary from key researchers and thinkers (Father José Arizmendiarrieta, AF Laidlaw, Ian MacPherson). The literature review's final and most essential component is a compendium of identity statements made by coopyouth, in which young cooperators defined their own motives and objectives as participants in the cooperative movement.

The selection of coopyouth research, cooperative philosophy, and coopyouth statements constitute a digest of coopyouth literature upon which current and future cooperative practitioners will continue to build. Such a collection can help establish a coherent chronicling of the evolution of interpretations and applications of cooperative philosophy and practice among and by coopyouth. This digest supports the "Words Mean Things" section of the toolkit that follows the literature review. "Words Mean Things" identifies, defines, contextualizes, and frequently reinterprets decades-old terms and concepts from movement discourse. The goal of this glossary-like section is to support readers in understanding the contemporary coopyouth worldview.

[1] Partnership between the International Cooperative Alliance & European Union
[2] International Organisation of Cooperatives in Industry and Services

LIMITATIONS

Language & Culture

Much of the motivation for developing the "Words Mean Things" glossary came out of the limitations

resulting from communicating across language, culture, time, and space. There are stigmas around certain words in certain cultures, there are concepts that don't translate into every language, and there is the risk of repression for individuals and cooperative enterprises by authoritarian actors (e.g. government, funder) that use certain terms or concepts in their work. The glossary sections seek to speak out the base values and philosophies of coopyouth interviewed, as well as those voices represented in youth statements while acknowledging this text was authored from a western, english language perspective. It attempts to serve as a fair representation of the foundational beliefs of most coopyouth who directly or indirectly contributed to this project, no matter their individual relationships to specific words or concepts. No matter the best of intent, there are inherent limitations in endeavoring to unite subjective visions from different languages, cultures, and contexts into one collective representation.

COVID

At the project's outset, thirty cooperative organizations were selected to participate in the research for this toolkit. These cooperatives were identified primarily using data collected by the 2018-2020 Coopyouth Movement mapping initiative of the ICA's Youth Committee (fka Global Youth Network), and supplemented by personal connections to cooperatives maintained by members of the Executive Committee of the ICA Youth Committee and the toolkit's author. The pre-selected cooperatives are summarized as follows:

REGION	AFRICA	AMERICAS	ASIA-PACIFIC	EUROPE	GLOBAL	TOTAL
PLANNED	8	9	10	9	1	37
ACTUAL	3	5	2	5	1	16

Interviews for the project began in July of 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. When the final interview was conducted in May of 2021, vaccines had become available, but were being distributed inequitably throughout the world. For some of the potential interviewees, the pandemic context provided them more time to participate in the interview process, while many others found themselves with less capacity to participate. An exact number of how many were prohibited by the pandemic to participate is unknown, as that number overlaps with other limiting factors.

Contact Info & Communication Practices

Interview solicitations were initially sent out via email and, when the requisite contact information was available, follow-up inquiries were made via Whatsapp and Facebook. The transient nature of youth made it difficult to ensure contact info was up-to-date, and whether or not the means of communication was effective varied greatly by location and culture. Whatsapp communication with specific individuals (versus Whatsapp organizational accounts) was often the most effective, but general organization email addresses were most of what was available via the Mapping Project data and internet searches. While the Cooperative Movement and others generally fetishize the relationship between "technology" and youth, young people share in the struggle to be actively plugged into the digital world. Over half of the world's population is "offline" (i.e. without a computer or consistent internet).[1] Therefore, many youth are generally inaccessible via communication mediums beyond SMS text and telephone. Despite multiple efforts to contact interviewees or obtain additional contact information, in addition to the expansion of the contact list to over forty potential participants, only sixteen youth cooperatives were successfully engaged in the interview process.

Asia-Pacific

It was most challenging to connect with coopyouth in the Asia-Pacific region, which is especially unfortunate given that the highest concentration of youth in the world is in that region. As a result, this region is the least represented and chronicled in our research. Accordingly, this limits the perspective and, potentially, the application of this work. The challenges encountered were in spite of the support of a few individuals within the ICA A-P structure (staff and volunteers), who dedicated

time and effort to endeavoring to connect coopyouth to this research project. One notable reason for this challenge can be attributed to a culture of hierarchical deference within the region's movement. Youth in the region reported that coopyouth and youth cooperatives will typically not respond to requests for participation or conversation from an outside party until those requests pass through a process of consideration by the regional Board and staff. Compounding the issues of hierarchy and bureaucracy is a notable lack of communication and mutual respect between elder leaders in the movement and its youth, making even intra-regional cooperation a challenge. For example, one youth cooperative wished to join the regional youth committee, but approval by regional leadership is required. To date, regional leadership has neglected to approve or even explain their decision not to approve their participation in the committee. In another instance, movement elders initiated a youth-specific event and did not engage the youth committee or other active youth. Whatever the tenor of intention behind these dynamics on the part of elder leaders, they are examples of organizational culture and practices that – unintentionally or not – hinder the kind and level of youth participation this research effort is seeking to empower. A deeper explication of some of these challenging dynamics between elder Boards and subordinate youth committees - which exist in other regions, as well - are included in several of the Key Issue chapters.

1 https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2019&start=1960...

FUTURE RESEARCH

In consideration of the limitations encountered during this course of research with a global scope, it would be especially valuable for more coopyouth research to be conducted at regional, national, and local levels. One of the coopyouth research reports - *Youth and Coops: A Perfect Match?*, included in the broader literature review, leveraged staff labor from each of the four regional offices of the International Cooperative Alliance to distribute and collect online surveys. As a result, their rate of return was much higher than the research efforts for this publication. The Asia-Pacific and Africa regions would benefit greatly from receiving sufficient financial support to conduct their own research to document the challenges and progress of their individual movements, specifically given the high percentage of youth in those regions, and their consistently lower participation in all of the coopyouth research outlined in the "CoopYouth Reports" section of the literature review. This, in turn, would greatly help any future global research and coordination efforts, as the relationships and networks established via more localized research could be utilized.

The first coopyouth research endeavor of this century - *Youth Reinventing Cooperatives* - solicited relatively freeform contributions from people around the world, which resulted in an interesting and rich resource that had strong representation from all corners of the world. However, the report was less successful in presenting a coherent global analysis of coopyouth experiences and identifying patterns or shared practices. While it is difficult to evolve a coherent deliverable from the large range of responses inevitably gathered by such a solicitation approach, the flexibility does seem to ensure higher response rates. In releveraging this method for future research, the solicitation could maintain the open format for the style of responses, but refine the focus of the prompt to a specific issue or issues, rather than more general storytelling and feedback.

Given the foundational and broad-scope of the coopyouth research so far this century, it can serve as a solid base for more issue specific research in the future. Some potential research topics include, but are certainly not limited to:

- an in-depth exploration of any one of the key issues outlined in this document,
- an examination of gender roles and expressions within coopyouth communities,
- asking coopyouth to provide personal reflections on and responses to specific cooperative canon (e.g Principles) and philosophy (e.g. review of "Pensamientos" by Father José Arizmendiarrieta),
- critiques of national and regional movement structures and processes from the youth

perspective, and
- solicitations for feedback on the development of educational resources or events.

The intention of this publication is to serve as a bridge between the first almost two decades of the global Coopyouth Movement work and the next. By summarizing the movement's accomplishments and using that to shape a contemporary expression or perception of youth cooperative philosophy and practice, the movement is provided a way marker by which it can assess its progress. It can also use the toolkit and its collected resources to direct the Coopyouth Movement's future work by informing governance decisions, directing more specific research initiatives, and educating existing and future coopyouth about the history and potential of their movement.

Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

The following three sections constitute a review of literature supporting the research done for this toolkit. These items are referenced throughout the toolkit, in order to tie the new reflections and analysis herein to past cooperative research and philosophy. The review begins by chronicling coopyouth research and reporting, a selection of movement canon and cooperative philosophy, and – most importantly – statements from autonomous youth contingents that formed during various movement events throughout the last decade.

CoopYouth Research

CONTENTS

Youth Reinventing Cooperatives

Young Perspectives on the International Cooperative Movement

Ian MacPherson, Robin Purga, Julia Smith (2005)

This English-language book was was compiled and edited by a team of three Canadian non-youth cooperators, using contributions from dozens of youth from around the world. The style and content of each submission vary greatly. The perspectives included in the book are very geographically representative, more so than any other reviewed coopyouth research or report. While many organizations helped collect and curate the youth submissions, the initiative was led by the British Columbia Institute for Cooperative Studies. The book was published in 2005, just as the global Coopyouth Movement was beginning to gain momentum and identity.

In the book's introduction, four perspectives on youth in the Cooperative Movement are outlined:

- stories of youth organizing their own cooperatives,

- cooperatives fostering youth engagement in the movement,
- relationship between youth and the Cooperative Movement relative to current social and economic issues (e.g. poverty, climate change), and
- the determination of youth to leverage cooperative solutions to respond to global issues.

Youth Reinventing Cooperatives (YRC) focuses, primarily, on the first two lenses for understanding the Coopyouth Movement. The reader's editors share that the perspectives of youth on the latter two points involve real critique of the greater Cooperative Movement: "Their messages are not always comforting and they can be harshly critical, but that does not mean they are wrong or should be ignored" (16). While this toolkit endeavors to explore what it is to be a coopyouth from all of the four perspectives listed above, but focuses on the first two, it is notable that the oral interviews included in the document often organically focused on the third and fourth perspectives: specifically, how coopyouth are perceiving current societal issues, and how they are leveraging cooperative solutions in the face of broad-scale social, economic, and political issues. This focus is reflected throughout many coopyouth reports when youth are surveyed about their motivations for pursuing cooperative opportunities - broadscale societal critiques and desires for transformation.

The first section of *YRC* is composed of stories and essays from coopyouth on their general experiences within cooperatives and cooperative programs. A loose case study format is then employed for the subsequent two sections, which share examples of how youth have developed cooperatives and how existing cooperatives have encouraged youth involvement, respectively. Given the nature of how the qualitative data was acquired by independent submissions, there is minimal uniformity throughout these sections. The basic items included in most of the case studies are: vision and purpose statement, organizational structure, origin story, links to community, future plans, and lessons learned. This generous case study framework was used as a reference in the development of the interview and survey questions used to gather content for this toolkit. Overall, the book contains such a broad cross-section of stories from the Coopyouth Movement that it is better approached as a narrative reader than a reference book. Like *Youth Reinventing Cooperatives,* this toolkit also employs storytelling formats, but it endeavors - via its structure - to serve as more of an "as needed" reference able to be read in parts.

The closing section of *YRC* contains conclusions and highlights, including the assertion that the Coopyouth Movement is relatively nascent, dating back only to just after the turn of the 21st century. This is an incredibly powerful insight, which can help account for why youth engagement in the Cooperative Movement has been relatively disempowered and unorganized until recently. Respondents report being drawn to the movement by its professed values which imply that broad-scale social, economic, environmental, and political transformation is possible. More conclusions that align with other research outlined herein include: no one approach to cooperative development works for all youth in every context (Once You've Seen One Cooperative...); cooperatives are a path to both income and self actualization; youth tend to learn about cooperatives only if they're in the "right place at the right time"; more research into coopyouth is needed; and money is the top issue for youth trying to create and serve cooperatively.

The recommendations call for:

- increased financial support of youth programs within the Cooperative Movement - specifically research and programming,
- more research into how different program models succeed or fail,
- assurance that any conducted research be widely accessible, and
- the Cooperative Movement to work harder to integrate cooperative education into schools and other institutional education systems.

Youth Reinventing Cooperatives is an incredibly important and powerful documentation of the Coopyouth Movement in its early years. It is perhaps the most comprehensive coopyouth report to date; it employs firsthand narratives without being filtered through culturally specific interview and survey frameworks. The wealth of insight provided by coopyouth about their own realities is

immense and indispensable for all readers.

Mapping Project

Global Youth Network* (2020)

Of considerable note among the reviewed coopyouth research initiatives is the *Mapping Project,* completed in late 2020 by the Global Youth Network of International Cooperative Alliance (*now referred to as the "Youth Committee"). The data from the mapping initiative, collected between 2018 and 2020, helped to identify the cooperatives interviewed for this current research endeavor. It also marked a first step in building a quantitative representation of the global Coopyouth Movement. The initiative delineated between coopyouth "cooperatives" and coopyouth "support initiatives," the latter of which were then further subdivided into seven categories. This categorization is unique to the *Mapping Project* and does not align with either of the typologies developed by the International Cooperative Alliance or the International Labor Organization.

This toolkit initially endeavored to maintain a distinction between "cooperative" and "support inititiative;" however, during the course of interviews for this toolkit, the stratification between a "cooperative" and a "support initiative" became extremely blurred. As a result, the cooperatives interviewed not delineated into those categories and all qualify as cooperatives, as they seek to adhere to the Cooperative Identity no matter their activities. The method of data collection and type of data collected via the *Mapping Project* was via radio buttons and dropdown menus via a survey greatly shaped the classification of the data. The project's researcher warned of potential errors in how some cooperatives self-describe, meaning that respondents may have either selected an incorrect type or were only able to select one type when they actually fulfilled the requirements for multiple types. Cooperatives' near-universal adaptability to any need and context, as well as their ability to meet various needs at once in ways not reflected in conventional business and organizational frameworks further complicates their taxonimization.

The *Mapping Project* connected with 178 respondents in total, accounting for 55 enterprises from 27 countries and 107 support initiatives from 51 countries. Most of the individuals respondents were paid workers within their respective organizations, though not necessarily members or owners. Less than one fifth of the respondents were volunteers. All respondents were 36 years old or younger. Questions covered the following topics: past participation or interest in future participation in international coopyouth events, financial status, perception of other cooperatives in their service areas, tools used and desired for communication and decision-making, as well as role of the international Coopyouth Movement in their local work. Respondents were also encouraged to offer general feedback.

Some of the key statistics and reflections generated by the study include:

ENTERPRISES

REGIONS:

- Africa: 35
- Americas: 9
- Asia-Pacific: 7
- Europe: 4

TYPE:

- Worker: 17%

- Consumer: 18%
- Producer: 28%; 87% of which in Africa
- Multi-Stakeholder: 37%

FUNDING:

- Autonomous: 64%
- Individual Donors: 18%
- Non-Governmental Organizations: 16%
- Government Funding: 13%
- Other Cooperatives: 11%
- Private Enterprise: 5%

SUPPORTS

REGION:

- Africa: 29
- Americas: 42
- Asia-Pacific: 17
- Europe: 19

TYPE:

- Cooperative Federation: 34
- CoopYouth Networks: 16
- Youth networks: 14
- Universities/Colleges: 9
- Cooperatives: 9
- Foundations: 4
- Developers: 4

FUNDING:

- Self-Funded: 65%
- Cooperatives: 38%
- Non-Governmental Organizations: 25%
- Government Funding: 22%
- Individual Donors: 21%
- Private Enterprise: 6%
- Service Users: 3%
- Foundations: 1%

REFLECTIONS

AWARENESS:

- 1 - Completely Unaware: 23%
- 2: 25%
- 3: 21%
- 4: 14%
- 5: 8%
- 6 - Highly Aware: 9%

WHAT RESPONDENTS WANT:

- Platform for sharing best practices and experiences

- Plan to promote cooperatives within educational institutions
- Unifying CoopYouth Manifesto

There are distinct differences in response rates between the *Mapping Project* and the toolkit interviews, which can be accounted for by a number of factors identified in the "How We Did It" methodology section. One unique to the *Mapping Project* that likely accounts for some of this higher response rate is the project's solicitation of responses from organizations that are both not exclusively engaged in cooperative work (e.g. general youth empowerment non-profits, educational institutions), as well as other organizations that are run by elders for youth. Anecdotally - due to a lack of formal data, such elder-led and conventional youth organizations typically have more staff/resources than youth-run cooperative enterprises, enabling them with more capacity to respond to calls for their participation in research projects than coopyouth enterprises.

Youth & Cooperatives: A Perfect Match?

#coops4dev (2021)

The *Youth and Cooperatives: A Perfect Match? (Perfect Match)* report outlines research conducted as part of a temporary working partnership between the European Union and the International Cooperative Alliance. Its content was developed using a global survey and complementary literature review, research methods similar to those used to create this toolkit. The *Perfect Match* project collected an impressive 420 completed surveys from individuals representing 20 countries. The scale of the response rate is partially due to their coordinated research efforts that leveraged staff within each of the four regional offices of the International Cooperative Alliance to solicit survey responses and to draft report chapters.

Using a framework of five "E's:" Employment, Education, (In)equalities, Engagement, and Entrepreneurship to organize the findings, the report sought to:

- provide insight into challenges youth face,
- improve cooperatives' support for youth, and
- generate general conclusions and recommendations.

The entirety of the report maps onto the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda created by the United Nations and its respective agencies. Relatedly, the literature review within the report focuses exclusively on documents drafted within formal NGO and governmental institutions (e.g. United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank), which strongly influenced word choices and shaped the overall worldview from which the report is offered. While there are different political perspectives and worldviews present throughout the document, likely a function of its collaborative authorship process, its overall framing and tone are akin to those employed by the groups represented in the literature review. A succinct example of this worldview is found in a discussion of the difficulties for youth to access post-secondary education in Guatemala. The report states "this seriously complicates the country's position in attracting investment from foreign companies which can potentially create an enabling environment for skilled jobs" (48). Statements such as this challenge the cooperativist worldview because of its inference that non-member ownership and investment are desirable, as well as its emphasis on education within a credential system rather than emphasizing the plurality of learning methods. This kind of inconsistency is understandable, as the Cooperative Movement struggles to remain distinct and both articulate and lives its values within the ever increasing "capitalist realism" (or, a world overwhelming defined by capitalism that embraces speculative investment and credentialism). You can read more about this phenomenon in the section called "Dirty Words?" in "Words Mean Things."

Of further and important note regarding worldview and language is the "employment" section,

which is heavily emphasized because a large majority of survey respondents selected "unemployment" as their primary challenge from a predetermined list of options (similar to the impact survey structure and content had on the data for the *Mapping Project*). The ensuing discussion focuses heavily on conventional forms of employment, as well as how conventional education can be restructured with the end goal of making individuals more "employable." However, the relationship between what characteristics and skills make someone employable and what characteristics and skills equip someone for cooperative membership is not made clear to the reader. Further, the focus on training youth to be more employable belies a number of potential realities - including those of youth working outside the formal economy but technically "unemployed," or those of youth who may not desire to become conventionally employed (e.g. youth interested in worker-ownership). A different, more expansive framework that is utilized for this toolkit considers the issue of "unemployment" to, instead, be more authentically represented as two distinct elements - a lack of fulfilling work and/or a lack financial sustainability and autonomy - without further judgement or assessment. Financial instability, lack of fulfilling work, and related concepts address the root of the issue without being prescriptive, unlike "unemployment," which implies the "answer" in the statement of the problem and excludes non-conventional solutions. The "and/or" is included because it is relatively common that a young person may have enough money through some means, but not be personally fulfilled in their life, as well as a young person may not have access to sufficient resources but has work they enjoy. Both the lack of personal fulfillment and lack of resources are addressed via cooperation. For a deeper discussion of how "work" is understood in the framework of this toolkit, refer to the "Definitions" section of "Words Mean Things."

The report provides a number of valuable data points and observations especially useful in advocating for policies or funding to support coopyouth initiatives, as well as several testimonials from coopyouth. Specifically, the survey and collected commentary offers critical feedback from youth for youth, as well as for elders and institutions within the Cooperative Movement. The predominant self-critiques in the testimonials are lamentations that the world is very capitalistic, which makes cooperatives a hard "sell" to young people who are aesthetically invested in "grind culture" and uphold a conception of entrepreneurship that prizes individualism and profit (88). In speaking to the broader Cooperative Movement, some comments identify there are many organizations that are capitalist enterprises that hypocritically call themselves cooperatives without loyalty to the Cooperative Identity. A coopyouth in Kenya said, "Cooperatives only suit the old and people who have money. There are no policies advocating for the youths to be given a place in their cooperatives'' (66).

Overall, many of the report's recorded observations echo other coopyouth reports and statements, thereby contributing to an overall consensus on a few key issues for coopyouth. For example, 65% of youth surveyed reported that the values and the principles are the "most important" feature of cooperation. Many of their testimonials include comments that orient the cooperative model outside the sole context of "business": either by referring to the power of its values to fuel social transformation at scale, or by recognizing how cooperatives can "be a solution to problems that 'traditional' providers of services (the nation-state, municipalities) are unable or unwilling to solve" (109). Feedback continues to point out that the state actively inhibits entrepreneurial activity with the exception of those with financial and educational privileges (111). Without privilege, there is generally little chance to participate in the presentation of solutions to problems that the government is no longer willing or able to solve; subsequently, only those individuals and private companies with sufficient resources typically succeed in entrepreneurial efforts better suited for cooperative development.

The report ultimately identifies seven strategies to engage more youth in cooperatives:

- improve knowledge of and boost the image of cooperatives with youth,
- develop more youth-oriented structures within cooperatives and support organizations,
- build real cooperative culture within existing cooperatives,

- strengthen partnerships between cooperatives and other organizations,
- promote decent work and employment, and
- advance an enabling environment for entrepreneurship (e.g. supportive policies).

Several actionable goal-oriented steps are proposed, and some of those steps would candidly require a philosophical seachange among the elders of the Cooperative Movement. For example, building real cooperative culture within existing cooperatives would require that cooperatives be self-critical and identify and correct their ideological failings - potentially to the loss of revenue. The report is incredibly comprehensive and has collected a great deal of narrative feedback and quantitative data that should serve the Coopyouth Movement for some time.

CoopYouth Reports Conclusion

Overall, the reports repeatedly highlight that youth are motivated to participate in cooperatives because cooperative philosophy and values align with both their own personal beliefs and mores, as well as with broad-scale strategies for social transformation. Time and time again, the general challenges facing youth were named as insufficient access to capital (for individuals and cooperatives alike) and lack of personal fulfillment and actualization. Youth are not attracted to cooperative work primarily to address their insufficient access to capital; rather, they seek cooperative work to cope with – and ultimately transform – the very system that functions to create the precarity under which they suffer.

Across the four surveyed reports, the least feedback was gathered from the Global South, which presents a considerable representation issue, especially since most of the world's youth reside in the Global South region. There are myriad reasons for the lack of feedback, including the usual suspects: language, culture, communication styles, and technological access (which often correlates to financial resources). More specific to the Global South, the impacts of colonization and globalization in the region have rightfully sown distrust of global institutions and those of the Global North. This compounds the distrust of the name "cooperative," as nominal "cooperatives'' were used as tools by foreign entities and governments during violent processes of colonization and globalization, which gravely misinformed many people as to what the cooperative model professes. This negative experience helped to shape the current 4th Principle of "Autonomy and Independence," which endeavors to make clear that any cooperative must be autonomous from government and other institutions, if it is, in fact, a cooperative. All of these research initiatives have taken place within a world community scarred by exploitation and oppression that have sown distrust and disconnect, and these reports reflect that fact.

Overall, the concert of coopyouth reports over the past several years has exponentially increased the amount of statistical data and narrative observations available to those endeavoring to empower youth and their cooperatives. It is heartening to witness the reinterpretation of cooperative philosophy as inherently transformative - reaching beyond narrow notions of business, employment, and entrepreneurship; though in many cases research methods and frameworks do not yet adequately facilitate this worldview. In the 2012 Coopyouth Statement authored during the Closing Ceremonies of the International Year of Cooperatives at the United Nations, youth made a plea for more research into the realities of cooperative work for young people. Research efforts must continue, with an initial task in that work being the development of investigatory frameworks that accurately represent youth perspective, rather than that of a given institution, and are thereby authentically responsive to coopyouth needs.

Cooperative Philosophy

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In endeavoring to articulate cooperative philosophy and practice in a contemporary context, it is imperative that the historical lineage of cooperative thought be considered - in particular, those texts that have been elevated to the level of consideration by the global movement at-large, which is responsible for stewarding the *Cooperative Identity*. That said, most of such essays and books were written in or translated into English, as well as authored by white men from the Global North. While there is considerable value in hearing critique and interpretation from those sitting among the seats of global capitalist power - as long as such authors are self-aware, the homogeneity of the perspectives represented in most widely acknowledged cooperative philosophy is a weakness the movement must address. More generally, the amount of globally accessible texts on cooperative philosophy is rather meager. For many reasons, chief among them the lack of cooperative curricula in educational systems throughout the world, there are very few peer-reviewed or sufficiently researched and contextualized writings exploring cooperation and its practice. That said, writing or research that passes through the filter of any non-cooperative institution will bear the marks of the culture - good and bad - from that institution.

Within this context, formal offerings of the International Cooperative Alliance - specifically, the *Cooperative Identity* and the *Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles* - are included as "Cooperative Movement canon" and are absolutely essential to any assessment of cooperativism. The additional cooperative philosophy included in this section includes two papers prepared for two Congresses of the International Cooperative Alliance that took place fifteen years apart, by A F Laidlaw (Eastern Canada) in 1980 and Ian MacPherson (Western Canada) in 1995. Also included is an additional paper authored by MacPherson created as a background text for the 1995 revision of the *Cooperative Identity* published in 1998. Included first – as the texts are reviewed in chronological order – is a book of commentary from Father José Arizimendiarrieta's (founder of Mondragon) life and work that spans a significant portion of the twentieth century. All three of these men and their thinking on cooperative philosophy and practice loom large within the history of the international Cooperative Movement. Their contributions extend well beyond those included here, in both word and deed.

This section on general cooperative philosophy has been included in this toolkit to clearly illustrate how coopyouth practice and culture maps onto an enduring lineage of cooperative scholarship, specifically in defense of coopyouth interpretations of cooperativism that are often dismissed as incorrect or too radical. The historical texts reviewed are also cited throughout the remainder of this toolkit, in order to continually tie the Cooperative Movement's present and future to its past. This ensures that both the knowledge gathered to date is not lost, and that the movement is only compelled to retread certain intellectual paths if we so choose.[1] Overall, these cooperative scholars paint a picture of a Cooperative Movement untethered to conventional notions of business and employment, rather enterprise and work, as well as an idealistic future that is born of pragmatic steps. the creation of cooperative commonwealths, and in which the application of solidarity knows no limit - though how each contributor interprets and communicates these ideas varies across time.

[1] Of important note is a book not outlined here, written by Max Delespesse (Belgian co-operator and writer) in 2009. It outlines utopian socialists and the leading figures of anarchy who have had an important intellectual and ideological impact on the Cooperative Movement.

Pensamientos

Father José Arizmendiarrieta (1915-1976, 1999)

Pensamientos, or *Reflections*, is a collection of thoughts and aphorisms compiled by a family member of their author, Father José Arizmendiarrieta. "Arizmendi," as many call him, was a priest and co-founder of the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation, the world's largest federation of worker cooperatives, located in the modern Basque Autonomous Community, which was once land claimed by Spain. In 1943, Arizmendiarrieta launched a cooperative university which was free and open to all young people in the region. Over time, a manufacturing worker cooperative founded by some students, "Ulgor," became the flagship cooperative for the still-existing federation. Arizmendiarrieta was an early adherent to Liberation Theology, an approach to Christian theology that later became popularized in its application in Latin America, and which stresses the liberation of all oppressed people as fundamental to the Christain faith. In practice, this means that the primary call of Christianity is to support all peoples facing economic, racial, ethnic, gender, and other kinds of mistreatment and marginalization. Arizmendiarrieta's application of liberation theology - in the 20th century and in the Basque region - focused on economic liberation, given that the region's people, after finding themselves on the "losing" side of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, were suffering ongoing economic repression by Nationalist President Francisco Franco. Arizmendiarrieta died in 1976, one year following the death of Franco.

The reflections, originally published in the Basque language and subsequently translated into Spanish and English, is split into two main sections: "People and Society" and "Work and the Cooperative Enterprise," both of which have several sub-sections. Throughout the text, there are several foundational beliefs and frameworks that are repeated -

- Chief among them is the centrality of education to cooperative work and enterprise. Given that Mondragon began as, and remains (in part) a university, this is an example of a philosophy that has borne great fruit.
- Additionally, Arizmendiarrieta consistently returns to the concept ofself-restraint in consumption, as well as the concept of solidarity meaning sharing*all* surplus with others according to need. The latter of which effectively constitutes his repeated calls for the redistribution of wealth, which he refers to explicitly and implicitly countless times throughout the text. Relatedly, in several sections, he warns against over-prioritizing the consumer orientation, "It is imperative that we be resolved to be more than relatively fortunate

consumers. [...] All we are doing is giving to our exploiters with one hand what we try to take from them with the other" (106).

- A third assertion that resonates within his reflections is that the necessaryfirst step in cooperative practice is the revolution of a person's mindset, or for a person to "unlearn" what predominant society has taught them. He considers this so essential that he believes, without it, broad-scale social transformation is impossible, no matter how much wealth can be shared or cooperatives constructured. "The redistribution of wealth is necessary, but the socialization of education is more pressing, to be able to *think* about the true humanization of work" (48).
- He viewed the Cooperative Movement as a vanguard among social movements, as - unlike many others - it addresses individual and social needs while uniquely dovetailing those efforts with striving for economic justice and revolution. Relatedly, he characterizes cooperatives and cooperativism not as an "end" or "ideal" but as a means to a not-yet-knowable ideal endthat we are unable to fully imagine at this point in time.
- His expression of solidarity extends beyond the Cooperative Movement to embrace all people working towards broad-scale societal transformation, all those having to endure oppression, and even to those individuals toiling in service to capitalism and other systems of exploitation. He suggests that the ideal future is one in which humanity is constantly striving to be naturally and necessarily pluralistic. "Cooperation is an authentic integration of people into the economic and social progress, which shapes a new social order. Cooperators must collaborate in the pursuit of this end goal, joining forces with all those who hunger for justice in the world of work" (94). This compassionate and inclusive viewpoint does not mean, however, that Arizmendiarrieta embraced immoral models and systems - just the people within them. He repeatedly makes clear he believes in the ultimate capacity of any and all people to move towards self-actualization and collective liberation.

His other incredibly significant contributions involve thedefinition of key concepts - cooperativism, work, and enterprise, which are extensively used to shape coopyouth interpretations of these concepts in this toolkit. "Cooperativism is the affirmation of faith in people, in work, in integrity, in human harmony, turned towards constant and progressive enhancement" (100). Primarily, he conceives of work as something distinct from "employment"; instead, it's viewed as the daily striving every individual enacts as co-conspirators in our collective existence. "[W]ork is the human contribution to the divine plan and designs to transform and improve a world" (64). Similarly, he never conceives of cooperatives as solely "businesses," rather that the enterprise is a "living organism" and "eco-social cell" by which people pursue a "path of personal and communal self-realization" through collective work (65). This kind of language and framing endeavors to move beyond the capitalist frameworks that presently structure most of our world, lives, and relationships.

Through his decades of work, he very clearly maintained a strong focus on youth, dedicating most of his work to empowering young people through the university in their role as a "vanguard" within a "vanguard movement." "It is easier to educate a young person than to reform an adult"(44). That said, overall, there is relatively little in the way of explicit and specific youth content in the reflections. However, the sentiments of Arizmendiarrieta deeply resonate with those expressed in formal and informal coopyouth discourse over the past decade. Many quotations from *Pensamientos* are included throughout this toolkit as affirmation and support of coopyouth work and thinking.

Cooperatives In The Year 2000

A F Laidlaw (1980)

A F Laidlaw, Canadian cooperator and student of Moses Coady,delivered *Cooperatives in the Year*

2000 as a report to the 1980 Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance convened in Moscow. His language choices and framing, notably made before the end of the Cold War and within the former Soviet Union, align more with contemporary youth voices than with the International Cooperative Alliance texts of today. He structures his report in six sections:

- Movement Status Quo
- General Global Conditions
- What are cooperatives?
- Problems Within and Faced By Cooperatives
- Choices Cooperatives Have for the Future
- Major Questions Facing cooperators

MOVEMENT STATUS QUO & GENERAL GLOBAL CONDITIONS

After orienting cooperators in the status quo by providing highlights of work done leading up to the Congress, he begins to discuss the realities of the world in 1980 that he felt will shape cooperatives in the year 2000. First, he humbles many readers by pointing out the loudest complaints about economic woes in the 1970s were coming from "the affluent people and the rich nations [...] getting just a taste of what is normal and perennial for the poor of the earth" (18). He goes on to further frame the economic downturn as nothing new for most of the world since "the poor tend to remain poor until the whole structure of society is transformed. Simple reform is not usually effective, and besides, it is painfully slow" (27). His overall commentary on how the Cooperative Movement fits into this context is that it will only succeed in the future if it focuses on strengthening its movements in the developing world. He consistently identifies capitalism as a threat and in direct opposition to cooperativism, and he asserts that in some parts of the world, "a whole new economic and social infrastructure will have to be constructed" (26).

He, then, dives more deeply into the role of cooperatives at the turn of the century within the global context he described. He warns that many cooperative systems will fail in an anticipated economic crisis while other cooperatives will have an opportunity to intervene to provide basic social services on a large scale when governments become unable to do so. He details how cooperatives cannot and should not try to compete with capitalistic enterprises, particularly those in multi-national markets. He explains how cooperatives' capital returns on dividends and their use of democratic decision-making processes mean the rules for the two groups are too different for them to be playing the same game. He also suggests cooperatives pursue enduring relationships with governmental institutions for an especially interesting reason - to be first in line to take ownership of traditional government services as they are defunded, before capitalistic enterprises can take them over and turn them into profit-generators.

> *"If [governments] are persuaded of the relevance of cooperatives to their own pressing problems, they may be more active in encouraging cooperative development and a wider application of cooperative principles" (29).*

Such a suggestion of the "wider application" of cooperative principles is still radical today – a shift from the conventional and narrow application of cooperatives to the private or social sectors, as the space of essential societal infrastructure has, in most places, been occupied by government agencies over the last century. This dovetails with his calls for creating community-scale cooperative commonwealths via multi-purpose and multi-functional cooperatives with community-wide membership, thereby blurring any divisions between the public and private sectors, as a stepping

stone on the way to global social, economic, and political transformation of broader society (35).

WHAT ARE COOPERATIVES?

His third section, outlining cooperative theory and practice as it operated during the last decades of the twentieth century, exposes a litany of issues, including:

- need for stronger cooperative ideology and accountability, where nominal allegiance to the movement's values can sometimes serve as a "system of presumed virtue" via which practitioners will consider themselves righteous without a deeper examination of whether their actions actually align with their professed values (32),
- issue with the growth of nominal cooperatives, as "legal requirements and corporate structure" can distort a cooperative's ideal nature; capitalist businesses are unjustly taking on the cooperative moniker, and formerly value-aligned cooperatives are succumbing to economic pressures and adopting practices that degrade their integrity (22, 35-36),
- needs for promptly and consistently revising the current wave ofcooperative philosophy, which is too consumer-oriented (33-34),
- need for understanding that much of existing and pastcooperative development – specifically international - has been for "prestige" or "visionary value," rather than meeting the immediate needs of the world's poor (34), and
- need for understanding that the democratic character of cooperatives is increasingly at stake; cooperatives must consider many more issues besides "one member, one vote" to assess whether or not they are truly democratic - for example, women have full membership powers, all workplaces must be controlled by the workers themselves, comprehensive education and leadership training programs need to be in place for members at all levels, among others (36-37).

More broadly, he points to inherent difficulties in research, schisms in movement ideology, the role of the state, and the movement's orientation within world politics. He highlights:

- much of cooperative organization's key strengths, objectives, and outcomes are difficult or impossible to measure and assess quantitatively,
- the movement experienced an ideological split mirroring Cold War logic – especially in Western countries – between movement actors who envision cooperatives competing within capitalism, and others whose ideals for cooperatives eschew capitalism and competitions and "aim to fulfill social and community aims instead" (38),
- the relationship between cooperatives and the State is highly controversialwithin the movement, and should be settled simply in acknowledging that cooperatives must be entirely autonomous for reasons even beyond those encompassed within the 4th Principle of Autonomy and Independence (4), and finally,
- the goal of cooperation remains to build a global, cooperative commonwealth, rather than simply excelling at marketplace competition (42).

PROBLEMS WITHIN & FACED BY COOPERATIVES

In the report's fourth section on cooperative performance, Laidlaw discusses factors within and in between cooperatives. He begins by stressing the necessity of strong membership commitments, the need for real participatory democracy rather than performativeor representational democracy, and – quite importantly – the need to address the widespread neglect of cooperative educationby the movement to those yet unfamiliar with cooperativism and its potential. He believes cooperatives tend to communicate (i.e. educate) poorly or insufficiently to the general public about who they are and what they do. Active and powerful outreach is often the main contributor to the perception of cooperatives in a given community - assuming there aren't pre-existing stereotypes (e.g. a class-specific institution, or a government agency in disguise) - in which cases, cooperative education of the general public becomes all the more important. Interestingly, his orientation of this critique within his assessment of individual cooperative performance illuminates that he believes

promotion and advocacy of cooperativism is primarily a responsibility of cooperatives in their local communities, rather than of movement or support organizations.

Within cooperatives, he cites increasing internal challenges between rank-and-file and managerial class professionals. The managerial class often takes control of the cooperative over time, and the rank-and-file members merely play a perfunctory role. Relatedly, he calls out that “most cooperatives try to be no more than conventional employers,” and that all cooperatives should pursue “autogestion,” or worker self-management, for their firms (53). Further, he suggests some “mission drift” has occurred within cooperatives and, in order for them to regain their ideological integrity, they must assess how aligned they are with addressing societal problems (e.g. hunger, extreme poverty, gender and race based violence) and, specifically, if and how well they serve the poor.

Of considerable note in his discussion of cooperative performance is the relationships between cooperatives. He recounts how the sixth principle of “Cooperation Among Cooperatives'' directs us to create a commonwealth that eclipses the influence of capitalism and oppressive state systems; however, the Cooperative Movement has specifically struggled to connect in this regard across national borders to accomplish the creation of a global commonwealth. He owes this struggle to internal conflict related to the proper role of the State and capitalist practices within cooperatives and their development, as well as to the lack of funding for governance and relationship building structures (e.g. International Cooperative Alliance) and events that most visibly consistute the movement.

Additionally, he owes some of the difficulty to the reality thatcooperatives account for some of their strength to their strong rooting in local cultures, languages, traditions, and social systems; however, this works against cooperatives internationally as it typically requires taking action across such differences or divides that can be difficult to traverse. Laidlaw recounts how the bulk of the cross-border work taking place is that of “international development,” which mostly consists of projects funded by foreigners that are shaped more by their vanity or impractical visions than by the actual needs of the recipient community. He also, in complement to his earlier critique of the state of local cooperative education and outreach, laments that the Cooperative Movement continues to rely on external agencies (e.g. United Nations) to do its advocacy and recruitment work on the global scale. The important irony in this reliance is that these external agencies are the same institutions from which cooperatives stress their autonomy.

CHOICES COOPERATIVES HAVE FOR THE FUTURE & MAJOR QUESTIONS FACING COOPERATORS

Given the historical context he presents and potential issues he identifies, Laidlaw sketches out what he perceives to be the necessary foci of the movement in the future: ensuring the global food system is designed to serve the world’s hungry rather than funnel money to its most powerful, addressing the plight of workers throughout the world as of primary importance, reimagining the consumer cooperative sector beyond its limiting orientation of “consumer” as it is increasingly irrelevant to the aims of cooperativism, and attention to evolving community cooperative commonwealths by creating multi-purpose cooperatives that fulfill some of the basic service provisions once promised by many governments. He closes by offering critical questions alongside several sub points for further consideration. His closing message is that future leaders of the Cooperative Movement must be sufficiently educated so as to be able to lead cooperatives as means to the end of social transformation in pursuance of a cooperative commonwealth, rather than as endgame business units. The text closes with a quote from British economist Alfred Marshal: “The world is just beginning to be ready for the higher work of the Cooperative Movement'' (71).

Statement of the Cooperative Identity

International Cooperative Alliance (1895-1995)

The *Statement of the Cooperative Identity (Cooperative Identity or Identity)*consists of a Defining Statement, a set of seven Principles, and a set of ten Values softly divided into two groups. It is a living document, which has evolved over the past century via three collective revision processes and will undoubtedly be amended in the future. The current *Cooperative Identity* was approved at the Global Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance in Manchester, England during 1995. This remains the cornerstone of the canon of the Cooperative Movement, which must be both responsive to successive reinterpretations of cooperative philosophy as the context of its application changes, as well as sufficiently solid to serve as a foundation on which evolving philosophy and reflection build. With a single sentence Defining Statement, one to two sentences elaborating upon each Principle, and single-word Values, the Identity Statement is brief, relative to the long history and breadth of activity it represents.

Perhaps as somewhat of a consequence of the beguiling simplicity of the text, the*Cooperative Identity* has been leveraged superficially as a "checklist of institutional structures" "rather than as an integral part of a coherent philosophy" (MacPherson, 1995, 209). Accountability and claims to *Cooperative Identity* are assessed only in an ad hoc fashion, if at all. Over time,many have come to, consciously or not, defer to legal corporate status as a measure of Cooperative Identity – in part because those unfamiliar with the canon of the Cooperative Movement may be only aware of corporate status as an identifier. There is no mention of corporate status in the Cooperative Identity.

The worldview presented in this toolkit honors a slightly modified version of the defining Statement of the *Cooperative Identity*. The modifications are indicated in bold -

> *"A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and**/or** cultural needs and**/or** aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise."*

The "and/or" modifications do not change the meaning or reach of the statement, they only serve to make it clearer. It is safe to assume the authors of the statement intended for its meaning to be just as expansive. However, making that expansiveness explicit is important in countering criticism of cooperatives that do not trade in financial capital, that only convene to meet social needs, or cannot be categorized as a "business." "Cooperative ideology must be broad and flexible, rather than narrow and stringent [...] business is stringent [...] human society is broad" (Laidlaw, 32).

Of the three elements in the *Cooperative Identity*, the Principles are the most well known, however, it is the Values that are, perhaps, the most definitive element - "self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others." In a seemingly paradoxical way, these are the most restrictive elements that require the most of any cooperative adherent, as they most readily break cooperativism free from conventional notions of "organization" and "business," and, instead, strive towards a new standard and formation of society. Many cooperative practitioners will openly share that the Values are their favorite part of the *Cooperative Identity.*

In 2015, the International Cooperative Alliance published a document,*Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles*, which – for the first time – elaborated in length upon a portion of the Identity

Statement in an official capacity. A review of the *Guidance Notes* is included later in this section.

1995 ICA Congress Address

Ian MacPherson, Chair of the Principles Committee (1995)

The research and writing of Ian MacPherson, spanning from the late 1970s to his death in 2013, is essential reading within cooperative theory. One of his most useful contributions is the address he made, as steward of the Committee undertaking a revision of the cooperative Principles and Values, to a Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance in Manchester, England during 1995. It is at that Congress that the three elements - a Defining Statement, set of Principles, and set of Values - formally became what we now call the *Cooperative Identity*. As an historian, he brought a valuable and reverent perspective on historical precedent to his stewardship of the global movement's engagement with cooperative philosophy. This was especially true in his work on the *Cooperative Identity*. He consistently endeavored to restate the interpretations of past cooperators in ways that were most relevant to his contemporaries. Since cooperatives are created solely to meet the needs of those using them, it is rational and logical that adaptations are necessary to meet changing needs. Our cooperative philosophy must also be organic - governed by continuous development while adhering to its basic tenets or axioms. "[E]ach statement of Principles, past and present, in fact, is a selective set of choices drawn from that heritage in order to meet the most pressing needs of cooperators and cooperatives at a particular time" (211). While the core values and intentions of the Cooperative Identity do not change, how it is expressed in word and deed necessarily changes across space and time.

The 1995 revision process was punctuated with references to two specific threats to the integrity of cooperatives and the Cooperative Movement:

- the rise of the private sector and its cooptation of cooperative terminology, paired with the over compliance of cooperatives with private sector practices; and
- nation-state dominance and its cooptation of cooperative terminology globally, but especially in the Global South.

In his address, MacPherson notes that these influences were first formally introduced into the realm of International Cooperative Alliance's philosophical conversations by A F Laidlaw in a report to the 1980 Congress, also reviewed in this section. Laidlaw's language, such as "New International Economic Order," was crafted before the end of the Cold War, while MacPherson's words were chosen after the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the "end of history." In our contemporary context, these two threats have not abated but have strengthened and adapted. They are now more readily recognizable as:

- the growing monopoly of capitalism on all economic, political, social, and imaginative activities throughout the world, as well as the related andincreasing adoption of capitalistic behaviors by cooperative entities;
- the rise of neoliberalism, or the evolution of the nation-state from economic mediator to primary agent of the private sector, thereby facilitating the continued encroachment of the nation-state on cooperative entities in order to enforce capitalistic standards.

In many ways, the second foe has evolved to exacerbate the first, transforming these two foes of cooperativism identified by both Laidlaw and MacPherson into one unit, with the nation-state existing in service to the capitalist marketplace. This brings all considerations of autonomy and independence from government entities into a new light. For more consideration on the interpretation of cooperative threats, refer to the "Words Mean Things" section titled "Isms."

Of considerable note in MacPherson's address outlining the Principle revision process is his detailing of the move by the German delegation to seek the removal of "cultural" from the Defining Statement in the proposed text. The stated reasoning for this edit was that the inclusion of culture muddied the primary goals of a cooperative as needing to be concerned with the "marketplace," given that they are economic organizations; in this framework - all other activities are optional. While "marketplace" is a relatively valueless term, it can safely be assumed that it was used synonymously with the capitalist marketplace in this context. In his speech, MacPherson reported that the Board and Identity committee had accepted that revision; however, it was ultimately rejected by the broader membership. This is a key moment in cooperative philosophy in which a representation of the movement's global membership refused to take a step towards narrowing the notion of cooperation to solely a business entity. If that had occurred, it would likely have relegated a global social movement to an international professional association. The German delegation was successful in the proposal to add "Self-Responsibility" to the set of Values.

As mentioned in the analysis of the *Statement of the Cooperative Identity,* another key takeaway restated throughout MacPherson's contributions is his observation of a tendency among many cooperatives to view the Cooperative Identity as a "set of organizational injunctions'' or a "checklist of institutional structures" rather than an integral part of a coherent philosophy" (206, 209). Such a perspective is supported by the reality of how difficult to impossible it is to quantitatively assess the performance and impacts of cooperative organizing. If something in its full and true complexity is difficult to measure, assessing whether or not a cooperative is living up the Cooperative Identity logically can't be as easy as making marks on a checklist. Despite some of the language in MacPherson's address coming off as euphemistic or coded at times by shying away from potentially divisive concepts or terms, its core sentiments align with those introduced at the Congress in 1980 by his colleague, Laidlaw. As a proponent of intellectual and cultural lineage, alongside the enduring relevance of the spirit of the *Cooperative Identity*, this comes as no surprise in MacPherson's offerings.

21st Century Cooperation

Ian MacPherson (1998)

21st Century Cooperation is the background paper authored by Ian MacPherson as accompaniment to the 1995 revision of the *Cooperative Identity*, as well as his address to Congree that same year. The paper was later formally published by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1998.

MacPherson begins by surveying the Cooperative Movement in the 19th and 20th centuries, as foundation to discussion of the Cooperative Movement's future. Of central interest is the evolution of "traditions" or "viewpoints" within the Cooperative Movement: Consumer, Worker, Saver/Borrower, Producer, and Service Provider. Consumer is accounted for in the English response to industrialization, Worker from French organizing in the 1840s, financial cooperation (Saver/Borrower) began to be most actively promoted in the German states around the 1850s, and agricultural cooperatives (Producer) gained prominence in Northern Europe during the 1880s. This viewpoint framework is a fair summation of how the Cooperative Movement has evolved, though it is lacking in its awareness that this was somewhat limiting of the movement's imagination.

While MacPherson generally supports and promotes this framework with some light critique, in assessing the "viewpoint" and "tradition" monikers in the contemporary context, a few key issues with the framework become apparent: these categorizations adhere to roles created or reinforced by the industrial revolution and the accompanying capitalist takeover of all remaining feudalist systems; these are conventional marketplace conditions and do not effectively represent all the existing and potential formations of cooperative activity. Accordingly, the framework fails to take

into account feminized forms of labor (e.g. reproduction, child and elder care) that are often organized into non-fiscal cooperatives, and each of these categories have typically been presented as occurring in distinct spaces and times (i.e. disallowing multi-stakeholder or multi-purpose cooperatives), and, further, the roles are presented as "choices" rather than basic human activities undertaken to survive and thrive repackaged and reorganized in service to capital (e.g if one is both the producer and consumer of a good or service, there is no opportunity to extract value during its exchange and therefore not acknowledged in the paradigm).

Further, and as MacPherson recounts, the incongruence of consumerism with cooperativism was noted first in the 1940s in preparation for the Principles assessment process of the 1960s, and has been brought up consistently over the past century. These critiques call into question the framing of the activities of the Rochdale Equitable Society of Pioneers, considered the founders of the consumer Cooperative Movement in the 1980s as seeking to be empowered consumers, rather than - perhaps - another interpretation, such as simply reacting to and endeavoring to survive the onslaught of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution. The Principles revision process in the 1990s explicitly sought to correct what was framed as an over-focus on the role of the consumer in the Cooperative Movement. However, this shift has not fully occurred, likely due to the great influence consumer cooperatives have within the movement due to their financial power, despite arguably not wholly adhering to the Cooperative Identity (e.g. retail food cooperatives denying their workforce rights/ownership). Most of the thinking that shaped the tradition framework came from Europe, and MacPherson notes that the other initiatives andmovements started outside of Europe have a "legacy of paternalistic government involvement," as they "were started through the direct action of imperial and colonial governments" from Europe seeking to capitalize on the resources of other parts of the world.

Indeed, many of the largest cooperatives of the late twentieth century have their roots in the "settlement experience" or, more aptly, the genocidal and still active process of colonization (224). The evolution of the Fourth Principle of Autonomy and Independence is part of this legacy, insisting that legitimate cooperatives are not beholden to outside people or groups, governments, in particular. MacPherson calls for an examination of "how cooperatives should relate to government" given that colonial history and, additionally, that, via the emergence of neoliberalism in the latter part of the twentieth century, "governments are increasingly less able and less willing to influence the economic, social and legal frameworks within which their citizens live" (230) and, rather, adopt a subordinate role to and in order to enable liberal capitalism. He spends a great deal of the paper discussing how best to interact with legislation and regulation, as well as how cooperatives are presented with the opportunity to step in to provide essential social services that are being increasingly eliminated by governments around the world. The latter sentiment was also voiced multiple times by Laidlaw in his Congress address, when he expressed that taking over social services abandoned by governments is a strategic step towards restructuring society into multi-purpose, local cooperative commonwealths.

Relatedly, MacPherson chronicles the last two decades of the century in which neoliberalism, which advocates for the capitalist privatization of government and social services, expanded to influence the globe. During the 1980s and 1990s, capitalism - as a political and economic system - was running a victory lap in the minds of many people following the end of the Cold War. This resulted in cooperatives and apex organizations shifting cultures and practices in the face of these pressures that compelled many to distance themselves from anything vaguely perceived as: communist, communal, or cooperative. This resulted in greater alignment and compliance with structures and behaviors in conflict with the *Cooperative Identity.* The most recent revision of the movement's philosophical canon, when a German delegation pushed for the removal of "culture" from the Defining Statement and the addition of "self-help" to the Value set, was completed in this context.

In considering the future of the movement in the twenty-first century, MacPherson updates Laidlaw's assertion that the primary external threats to cooperation are capitalism and "big" government. He added that -

> *"[t]he greatest challenge confronting cooperatives did not come from the outside world. As in the past (and as it will be in the future), the most serious threat was not the competition. It was not even the altered political order. It was in the hearts of discouraged cooperators. It was a matter of resolve, an uncertainty as to what the movement could offer the contemporary world" (230-231).*

In response, MacPherson shares that the key to the success of the Cooperative Movement in the twenty-first century is in the movement projecting "a clear sense of its distinctiveness" (233). This assertion is surrounded in the text by calls to learn from capitalist enterprise and public sector actors, alike, while not going so far as to wield the "master's tools." To the end of establishing distinctiveness, he shares that one must have pride in their identity as a cooperative and cooperator, which means that identity has to be clearly understood and integrity to that identity upheld. In service to this, "it is in the struggling to understand how the range of possible action, implicit in cooperative thought, principles, and practice should be applied in the contemporary experience that cooperators make their contribution" (253).

MacPherson frames the contemporary experience at the start of the twenty-first century via five trends:

- increasing population,
- concentration of economic power,
- degradation of the environment,
- complex problems with physical and service infrastructure, and
- issues of social justice.

To close, he moves through various sectors and industries in the Cooperative Movement expounding their potential future in the face of these trends. In addition, he observes and predicts how women, youth, and indigenous peoples might be impacted and can be impactful. Most notably regarding youth, he shares,

> *"[t]he rich and diverse traditions of the movement, its subtleties and potential of its philosophies, need to be reconsidered and reapplied by each generation.* ***The sooner young people are involved, the sooner they begin to consider for themselves how the Cooperative Movement should be adjusted for their times, the better it will be for all.*** *The dialogue across generations of cooperators is a fundamental requirement for continuing success" (252).*

These closing sentiments signal a passing of the torch to the next generation in our shared lineage of cooperative philosophy.

Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles

International Cooperative Alliance (2015)

Authored via a three year collective process, the *Guidance Notes on the Cooperative Principles (Guidance Notes)* constitutes a unique outgrowth of the stewardship of the Cooperative Identityby the International Cooperative Alliance. In 2011, representatives from the Americas initiated a conversation within the International Cooperative Alliance to amend the Seventh Principle, “Concern for Community,” to more explicitly acknowledge how humanity is in relationship and community with the environment and non-human life. In turn, a Principles Committee was established, with only elder - mostly white - men and Executives serving as members. The Committee selected individuals and small teams of cooperators from around the world to each author white papers on a given principle. Those papers were then collected and edited into a coherent volume by British cooperator, David Rodgers, with experience in the housing sector and national politics.

Given the nature of how the document was drafted, each Guidance Note employs different methods of research, data collection, and authorship. The most obvious of these differences is the use of citations – some sections utilize none, others use them extensively. Perhaps the most notable but least visible is that only one Principle chapter, the Sixth Principle "Cooperation Among Cooperatives," completed a survey and outreach process to collectively source content from around the world. The language is relatively authoritative and states a commitment to using “universal” language, which typically refers to the western, english language employed within NGO and global government spaces. The document opens with an introduction from the first woman and then International Cooperative Alliance President, Dame Pauline Green, and is followed by a preface from Jean-Louis Bancel, Chair of the Principles Committee. Monsieur Bancel shares that the primary audience of the Guidance Notes is “the upcoming generation of cooperative leaders; the notes aim to encapsulate the knowledge and expertise of the current generation of cooperators for the benefit of the next” (xi). Green shares a powerful quote taken from a consumer cooperative in Great Britain dating back to 1938 -

> *“The cooperative ideal is as old as human society. It is the idea of conflict and competition as a principle of economic progress that is new. The development of the idea of cooperation in the 19th century can best be understood as an attempt to make explicit a principle that is inherent in the constitution of society, but which has been forgotten in the turmoil and disintegration of rapid economic progress.”*

Each Guidance Note is structured the same by beginning with abrief introduction, an interpretation

of words and phrases within the Principle itself or of adjacent topics, and it then delves into specifics of each Principle delineated by headers. It closes each section with matters for further consideration structured similarly to the earlier discussion of the Principle. While the document is just over one hundred pages and employs a significant amount of technical language, the intentional and uniform formatting of the document makes it both relatively accessible and usable as a reference tool - more so than as a narrative document.

There are thirteen uses of the word "youth" in the text, clustered in the Guidance Notes of the First (Voluntary & Open Membership), Fifth (Education & Training), and Seventh (Concern for Community) Principles. In its first mention as part of the First Principle, age discrimination is highlighted, as is the specific "danger of control by older members, effectively stifling the engagement of a younger generation," as cooperatives need new younger members in order to sustain themselves (10). This is the same point presented in the final mentions of youth in the document as part of the last Principle, Concern for Community, which points out that, without youth, cooperatives will cease to regenerate, autogestate, and exist.

It goes on to suggest specific methods to ensure youth engagement – "elected youth representatives on boards, youth conferences, support for youth activities and cooperative youth organizations, and support cooperative education in schools, colleges and universities" (90). Within the context of discussion of Education and Training, which is the bulk of the consideration of youth in the document, the importance of educational cooperatives is the focus of discussion and, specifically, that cooperative schools are essential for the promotion and sustainability of the cooperative model and movement by spreading awareness and recruiting youth participants.

Internally, the *Guidance Notes* urges cooperatives to develop youth boards as a form of recruitment, education, and institutionalized form of intergenerational dialogue. While wonderful in theory and intention, the development of regional youth committees and networks throughout the last decade has resulted in significant struggles with elder Boards around youth autonomy and sufficient support has illustrated that there are right and wrong ways to do so. It has also allowed for youth leadership and participation to be tokenized or essentialized and sidelined, rather than incorporating youth perspectives authentically into an intergenerational dialogue. With regard to empowering youth into leadership roles held be elders, alike, and in a manner than authentically reflects some of the living contradictions within Cooperative Movement practice, it also promotes targeting the "most talented members [of a cooperative] to stand for election" - often used as justification to not empower youth, rather than advocating for all members of a cooperative to pursue leadership and be sufficiently supported in doing so (25). This a key example in the context of coopyouth, as a lack of experience or tenure can cause cooperatives to judge young people as less talented and, thereby, less worthy of full participation than elder counterparts.

The closing section of the document is a collection of glossary terms and abbreviations, some of them were used to shape the language of this toolkit. However, it is in this breakdown of concepts that a bias towards interpreting cooperatives as businesses, rather than tools for social transformation, becomes especially clear. Of special note within those items included is "cooperative commonwealth," a term used throughout the Cooperative Movement canon, typically indicating a society beyond the lifecycle of capitalism into self-governed commons - in which wealth and value are managed, not pursued or created. "Commonwealth" is described therein as "the combined economic, social, and environmental activities and effects of all cooperative enterprises that create wealth in a sustainable way for the many, not the few." One of the fallacies of capitalism is its belief in infinite growth, and that wealth can be created, rather than understanding the resources available to humanity on earth as finite. Interestingly, some of the terms such as "capitalism" and "colonialism" are absent from the glossary, despite their persistent importance for the movement and for all peoples - those terms are defined in the "Word Mean Things" section.

Overall, the *Guidance Notes* are most useful in their chronicling of a comprehensive list of issues and considerations within each of the Principles. At times, the discussion of certain issues is rather

superficial, likely an understandable attempt at achieving universality. Despite any critique, it provides a solid foundation from which deeper conversations can grow and is concurrently helpful in revealing the perspectives on and interpretation of cooperativism by those elders and others with access to the international spaces and mechanisms within which cooperative canon is typically evolved.

Philosophy Conclusion

While the profiled cooperative philosophy is not exhaustive, it provides a general overview of the arc of contemporary cooperative discourse on the global stage over the past half century. During that period, significant world history included: the end of the Cold War, the US beginning an endless global war on "terrorism," multiple economic recessions, a troubling resurgence of fascism, and countless uprisings and collective expressions of a desire for new social, economic, and political orders. These events changed the landscape in which cooperative work is being conducted; they changed the language we use to discuss it.

LANGUAGE SHIFTS

The contributions from MacPherson are written after the Cold War, yet they shy away from explicit system critiques of socialism or capitalism, despite how the world was assailed by an ideological war between these two concepts for much of the century. You can read more about this language shift in the "Dirty Words" section of "Words Mean Things." While he occasionally refers to capitalist firms, his observations and theories align more succinctly with a "business ontology" that envisions cooperatives operating primarily as business entities rather than as cells of human collaboration and development, as framed by Arizmendiarrieta. This is also mirrored in much of the cooperative canon presented, which utilizes relatively sanitized language likely in a genuinely noble endeavor to achieve universality in tone. However, Arizmendiarrieta and Laidlaw have repeatedly and directly leveraged direct, systemic critiques, and declared that the necessary transformation of society will require the end or, at least, the significant weakening of capitalist and nation-state regimes. Overall, these philosophers - notably all white men from the Global North - share similar sentiments and end goals, though the language they use becomes more reformist and less exacting over time and as political conditions change.

COMMONWEALTHS & SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Similarly and interestingly, the concept of cooperative commonwealths as means to social transformation is found throughout all of the texts, but the use of "commonwealth" and "social transformation" language faded considerably at the end of the 20th century given the above dynamics. It has since been reestablishing its position in formal cooperative discourse largely via youth- and worker- specific communications, including in the *Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles* in its discussion of the Sixth Principle, "Cooperation Among Cooperatives," which - interestingly - was the only Guidance Note primarily authored by youth. MacPherson, Laidlaw, and elements of the Guidance Notes all speak to how the growing reductions of social services - once traditionally provided by nation-state governments - presents an opportunity for cooperatives to take more responsibility for these services. This effort is outlined by some as an explicit and powerful step towards creating cooperative commonwealths. It implies partial or complete replacement of governments with cooperative enterprises. MacPherson would likely conceptualize such a step as a process of "privatization," whereas Laidlaw would likely call the same thing a dismantling of the government and a move towards community self-governance. These social transformation and commonwealth interpretations of cooperativism are in stark contrast to many very visible contemporary interpretations of cooperativism, particularly with regard to its relationship with government and the nation-state.

ROLE OF YOUTH

Of special note for this toolkit is the relatively cursory content directly addressing the role and potential of youth within the Cooperative Movement. Powerfully, the content which is included provides instructions for young people to take up cooperative discourse and the mantle of cooperative practice as soon as possible. It also challenges youth to come to their own understanding of the *Cooperative Identity* and, more broadly, cooperativism as philosophy and practice, just as is being done via this toolkit. Youth are identified as necessary for the sustainability of the Cooperative Movement, but feasible and progressive actions towards better intergenerational integration are not often named. Wealth redistribution, a key tenet of contemporary coopyouth strategy laid out in the "CoopYouth Statements" section, is cited in a few of the texts but without connection to the prospect of strategizing or funding youth participation or the participation of other marginalized peoples. While language and tone differs over time, the essence of the *Cooperative Identity* must be maintained and protected. The following section reviewing CoopYouth Statements, authored by coopyouth during the last decade, is a continuation of the cooperative discourse just outlined.

CoopYouth Statements

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The following is a collection of the most notable youth statements made at various international movement events dating back to the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives. During and following that International Year, the Cooperative Movement saw an upsurge in youth interest and engagement in cooperative organizing work. While some of this increase in interest was due to the awareness raised by the collaboration with the United Nations, it was most directly linked to the increase in funds that local, national, and regional sectoral organizations committed to grants, scholarships, and extra programming in celebration of the year-long event. All of the included statements were authored during movement events around the world, and they range from some

fully sanctioned and commissioned by host organizations or events, to statements drafted wholly autonomously and, at times, somewhat antagonistically towards the host event or organization. As the practice of developing coopyouth statements at events became consistent, so, too, did the presence and work of the Youth Committee (formerly Global Youth Network') of the International Cooperative Alliance. As a result, the work of drafting statements became stewarded by the Youth Committee and largely institutionalized; the most recent statement took the form of a formal governance resolution to the International Cooperative Alliance Board in 2019. At the time of the release of this toolkit, all the elements of the resolution have yet to be enacted, so only time will tell if the many years of work by coopyouth to organize themselves and curate their movement voice has been successful in creating a strong and respected youth identity and role in the global Cooperative Movement.

International Year of the Cooperative: Closing Ceremonies

United Nations

New York City, New York, USA (2012)

The evening before the final day of the United Nations' (UN) Closing Ceremonies for the International Year of Cooperatives, a globally representative group of youth spent several hours drafting a statement in a spare New York City office directly across the street from the main UN campus. What resulted was a document outlining how the current political, social, and economic context disproportionately harms youth and how cooperatives can help to address the issues youth face in that context. To that end, in the section following the Preamble, "Why Cooperatives," is a list of things youth can gain from cooperative experience, including but not limited to: social consciousness, self-actualization, money, work ethic guided by self motivation, and skill and personal development.

The statement also outlines the challenges that the movement faces in connecting youth to cooperative experiences that can provide the identified benefits. Statement authors pointed to the knowledge gap among young people, most of whom have little to no knowledge of the cooperative model or movement, as the primary challenge. Of those youth that have some knowledge of cooperatives, many perceive cooperation as an outdated model of business for farmers or other traditional workers. Some of this knowledge gap was accounted for by an insufficient amount of accessible education about cooperation, as well as that much of the educational information that does exist represents an elder-defined cooperative worldview that differs from that of youth. Another potential reason for the cooperative knowledge gap among youth was the misappropriation of the term "cooperative" by governments around the world, particularly by those located in the Global South or by imperialist governments responsible for the colonization of those areas. These external challenges to the movement are considerable, especially when paired with intra-movement challenges. One of the key intra-movement challenges referenced was the tendency for elders to view younger people as competition, or to dismiss their ideas because they feel youth lack real commitment to or understanding of cooperative work.

In order to overcome the challenges presented, the statement puts forth the following suggestions:

- Cooperatives & Other Institutions Must Extend Themselves -to support, include, and understand young people and their needs;
- Governments & Policy Makers Need to Acknowledge Youth Explicitly -by using youth-specific language in their legislation and initiatives, by taking steps towards lessening the bureaucratic burdens placed on youth by governmental institutions;
- More Research & Statistical Standards for CoopYouth -to establish a stronger understanding of what youth need, how to engage with youth, and how to assess the success of youth in

cooperatives;
- Implement Cooperative Curricula in Educational Institutions -via advocacy and resource sharing; and
- Redistribute Money From Wealthier Cooperatives -towards cooperative development initiatives for youth and other marginalized peoples.

The statement closes out its suggestions for the movement by committing to raising awareness among peer groups, taking an active role in civil society as individual youth, and promoting the strategic use of the sixth principle in order to pursue and achieve the suggested actions.

Overall, the statement maps cleanly onto sentiments echoed by both elders and youth in the Cooperative Movement, as many of the challenges (e,g, knowledge gap) and suggested actions have been topics of conversation for many years. It does not offer much in the way of criticism, beyond pointing out some of the interpersonal dynamics that have arisen between youth and elders in cooperatives that have contributed to a cultural schism in the movement. There is language clearly outlining a strategy of wealth redistribution within the movement, and given that the phrase "wealth redistribution" was not explicitly used, it suggests it came from a place of intuitive reason rather than learned ideology. Unlike most of the other existing statements, this statement was not the result of a highly intensive, large group, participatory process, rather it was the work of a select few - though geographically representative - coopyouth who had been invited by the United Nations to participate in the event.

Cooperate To Transform Society

International Summit of Cooperatives

Quebec City, Quebec, Canada (2014)

The process that created the statement, *Cooperate to Transform Society,* involved an autonomous and unsanctioned group of youth gathering in the basement of the building where the International Summit of Cooperatives was being held. While the statement is more general in tone, it is clear that much of the suggested actions are outgrowths of event-specific critiques. The vision presented in the statement is to transform society from capitalistic to cooperativistic, and to do so, the Cooperative Movement must -

- "not emulate capitalism's institutions, look to its leadership and theory for guidance, or [staff] the management teams of our cooperatives with subscribers to neoliberal philosophy;"
- center the perspective and leadership of those most impactedby economic recession, climate change, and political instability;
- be a bottom-up, rather than a top-down, movement; and
- revise global event formats to reflect the people-led, anti-capitalist Cooperative Movement youth believe in, as most current events do not mirror this reality.

Speaking directly to event formats, the statement names greater participation of frontline communities - or those that will and are experiencing the harms of exploitative and unsustainable societal systems - as absolutely essential, and the call is made for the movement to fund the travel and attendance costs of those attendees. Further, the statement urges less use of presentation and "banking" style education - in which information or knowledge is deposited in the student or attendee - sessions. Instead, the statement encourages greater use of more participatory and accessible forms of group engagement - such as ad hoc affinity groups and open space skillshares. Finally, the statement asks for the events to focus on the cooperative philosophy and how it can be manifested with integrity in the contemporary context, rather than how to compare or assess our cooperative performance relative to that of capitalist enterprise.

The statement also calls for the redistribution of Cooperative Movement wealth to fund the following specific items: an online communication platform for coopyouth, coopyouth entrepreneurship awards, and the creation of more educational resources (e.g. curricula). In closing, the autonomous group of youth authors committed to continuing to push for these ends via the International Cooperative Alliance's Youth Committee (formerly Global Youth Network). By providing more exacting criticism and incredible precise requests, *Cooperate to Transform Society* presents a clearer youth voice and more actionable agenda than that of its predecessor from the UN Closing Ceremony. While the statement is also more antagonistic than the previous, it does not have a pejorative tone and expresses desire to continue working within the movement it also critiques. It is worth emphasizing the closing commitment to further engagement on the named issues via the Youth Committee, as it is both a show of respect for the brader movement, as well as marking the beginning of an important transition of self-organized youth efforts into formal movement infrastructure.

Youth Statement on Cooperative Leadership

International Cooperative Alliance Global Conference

Antalya, Antalya, Turkey (2015)

Relative to past statements, the *Youth Statement on Cooperative Leadership* took on a much more issue-specific angle in its content. The statement writing process was organized, and the issue topic of "Cooperative Leadership" was selected by the USA Cooperative Youth Council (USACYC), which submitted the process as a workshop proposal to the International Cooperative Alliance conference. While the workshop was known to and approved by the International Cooperative Alliance, the presentation of the statement publicly was not discussed or guaranteed ahead of time. Once the statement was authored, it was delivered at a general conference session by Sebastien Chaillou, who would soon become the first elected president of the Youth Committee (formerly Global Youth Network).

The Cooperative Leadership workshop utilized a Peoples' Movement Assembly (PMA) format, which evolved out of the United States' Social Forum (USSF), which self-identifies as "a movement building process. It is not a conference; instead, it is a "space" or opportunity to advance peoples' solutions to economic and ecological crises. The USSF is the next most important step in our struggling yet determined effort to build a powerful multi-racial, multi-sectoral, intergenerational, diverse, inclusive, internationalist movement that transforms this country and changes history" (from the 2010 USSF website). As part of the PMA process, the coopyouth group, first, took time to educate themselves about the general meaning of leadership and, second, discussed the current status of leadership within the Cooperative Movement. Specifically, the group explored how neoliberal and capitalist values had aggressively and harmfully shaped the mainstream understandings of leadership, success, and democracy to the extent that had infiltrated the Cooperative Movement and corrupted the movement's sense of cooperative leadership. Specifically, they identified that the Cooperative Movement largely fails to lift up the marginalized - youth, included - into leadership.

The final statement resulting from the above process committed its authors and the broader coopyouth contingent to building a truly Cooperative Movement via:

- Participatory Democracy - large group consensus building processes (e.g. PMAs), year-round online discussions within the International Cooperative Alliance membership, the use of consensus decision-making models at all levels of International Cooperative Alliance decision-making, moving away from a "false model of overly representational democracy;"
- Leadership Succession & Shared Leadership - term limits, gender quotas, shared management structures among staff and executives, statutory seats and full voting rights on all International

Cooperative Alliance boards and committees, youth staff development policies within the International Cooperative Alliance; and
- Autonomous Youth Organizations - all youth organizations and boards must be autonomous at all levels (global, regional, national) – specifically, they decide who their members are and how to spend any money to which they have access.

These commitments were closed out with the following: "We are building this now for ourselves. We are building this for future youth. We call on the broader Cooperative Movement and – specifically – the International Cooperative Alliance Board of Directors to join us in this important work by implementing these changes to foster a brave, loving, just, and intergenerational Cooperative Movement."

Following the presentation of the statement in the general conference session, Sebastien Chaillou added a few sentiments from his perspective as a student unionist and activist in France. He shared that "my generation and the next don't believe in traditional politics anymore – we have stopped participating in elections [...] no political party can solve this." He went on to say "To me, cooperatives can be the social movement of this new century, a movement that empowers people, a movement with values, a movement with creative solutions, a movement where we share, a movement which extends citizenship into economics, a movement that protects the environment, peoples' rights and wellbeing. We, the Cooperative Movement, can be this movement...can't we?"

The overall tone of the statement and Sebastien's subsequent remarks captured the sentiments from the 2014 statement while also identifying additional actions to be taken and more deeply adopting the language of social movements and social justice. Coopyouth spaces and voices during this time period resoundingly engaged with movement and social justice language. It had become clear that youth see cooperatives not as a "better form of business" and more as local, autonomous units of a social movement working to bring about broad-scale societal transformation. In accordance with this worldview, it is notable that many of the youth who co-authored the youth statement also participated in an intergenerational direct action during the conference.

Turkey's recently elected President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was invited to address attendees, as is the practice for all leaders of International Cooperative Alliance conference host countries. The meeting was during 2015, very early in Erdogan's rule, before the expansiveness of his violence and repression was fully known. Though, the history of the oppression of the Kurdish people by the Turkish nation-state had been long well-known. Erdogan did not attend the conference, but sent the Minister of Economy as his representative.

> *"During the minister's address, a dozen conference attendees participated in an intergenerational and youth-led walkout demonstration while holding signs with messages such as 'Cooperation with the Kurds' and 'Cooperation Not Coercion.' A statement on the walkout has since been issued elaborating on the reasoning behind the action and levying a challenge to the International Cooperative Alliance and Cooperative Movement to consider the political implications of partnering with certain nation-states."*

This direct action in solidarity with the Kurdish people, many of whom use the cooperative model to structure every aspect of their communities ranging from sustenance to self-defense, was an explicit assertion by coopyouth that cooperation exists within a social justice movement framework. It is worth noting that the G8 was being held at a resort next to the location of the International Cooperative Alliance events. Secret police investigated those who participated in the action by asking resort guests and conference attendees if they knew the names of anyone in a photo of the action.

Youth were not alone in making this call – elders also participated in the action and signed the statement. The International Organisation of Industrial and Service Cooperatives (or, CICOPA, which is essentially the worker cooperative branch of the ICA) issued their own statement calling for greater transparency around country selection by the International Cooperative Alliance for its events and making "a commitment to be a political voice on substantial issues related to economic and social justice." The sincerity and strength of the statements from the event, as well as the potentially unprecedented instance of direct action at an International Cooperative Alliance event, signaled a turning point for the Cooperative Movement. This call to consider the Cooperative Movement as a global voice accountable to the struggles of all oppressed people was not new, but it was perhaps the loudest and most direct assertion of this call to the movement in collective memory.

#CoopYouth Manifesto

International Cooperative Alliance Global Conference

Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2017)

The full text and video created by youth to shape the larger coopyouth manifesto could not be located; however, a key summary blurb remains accessible and is included here in full:

> *"Through the increased engagement of youth and the implementation of our practices and systems of organization throughout the broader movement will enable all of us to more effectively fight in the global cultural battle against neoliberalism, which has hurt humanity by making competition and individualism central values within society, and imperialism, which has impaired our efforts to cooperative globally by centering wealth and power accumulation as goals within our politics."*

By and large, the sentiments from the larger manifesto emphasized in this summary statement signaled a clear commitment to continue to explicitly name cooperativism's foes. It helped to orient cooperative work as revolutionary and transformative. The tone of the presentation during the event and this statement both feel far more assertive and definitive than past statements, which is a

reflection of the state of the Coopyouth Movement's formalization at that time.

Global Youth Network Resolution

International Cooperative Alliance Global Conference

Kigali, Rwanda (2019)

During the Congress following the Global Conference in Kigali, the International Cooperative Alliance Board approved a resolution from the Youth Committee (formerly Global Youth Network), which was explicitly stated as building upon the work over the last decade of coopyouth organizing at the international level. In its introduction, it acknowledged the growth of the Youth Committee and, specifically, the first independent election of its President in 2017. The evolution of the Youth Committee runs somewhat parallel to transformation of ad hoc youth statements into formal governance resolutions that formally engage the intergenerational International Cooperative Alliance Board.

The resolution calls for four specific agreements and actions:

- Harmonize Regional Youth Networks/Committees - all youth networks and committees are autonomous in selecting their membership and spending their funds - they need to be respected as such in all four regions; all regions need to fill a statutory youth representative seat on their Boards with full voting rights and funded meeting participation;
- Include the CoopYouth Action Plan in the International Cooperative Alliance's Global Strategy - approving both the action plan drafted by the Youth Committee and its accompanying budget is imperative to the movement and a small form of wealth redistribution;
- Financially Support All Youth Representatives - fully fund the travel and attendance costs for youth representatives to official International Cooperative Alliance global events, regional network, as well as an annual in-person meeting of the Youth Committee, another form of wealth redistribution; and
- Make the Youth Committee More Accessible - through the use of more inclusive communication tools and bylaws, it is possible to foster greater participation from more youth around the world

These action calls are very specific and all within the power of the International Cooperative Alliance Board and its Regions to implement. At the time of the authoring of this toolkit, the Asia-Pacific region has yet to fulfill the agreement to align their treatment of the International Cooperative Alliance A-P Cooperative Youth Committee and their youth representative with the Board approved resolution. Other aspects of the calls are yet to be fully tested, given the halting of in-person events due to the COVID pandemic. A considerable amount of trust between coopyouth and the broader movement is at stake. As time progresses, it will become known whether or not the broader movement will be truly accountable to its agreements with coopyouth or if the approval of such a resolution and its plans was only lip service.

CoopYouth Statements Conclusion

The Cooperative Movement is incredibly fortunate for the ambition and engagement of young people over the past decade. The authoring of these statements, which are indispensable cooperative canon, and the creation of the Youth Committee (formerly Global Youth Network) are huge accomplishments that were initiated and stewarded by youth. While the International Cooperative Alliance does not dedicate a full time staff person to youth activities, the staff person

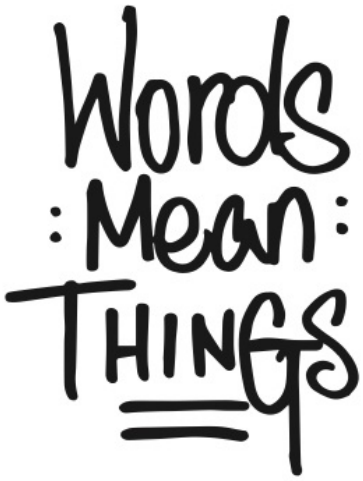
who commits partial time to supporting coopyouth, Director of Membership Gretchen Hacquard, was one of this century's earliest coopyouth organizers. The primary author of this toolkit, Emily Alice M Lippold Cheney, was present and a participant in the authoring of all except for the most recent coopyouth statements. This is testament to the degree to which movement institutions and infrastructure have listened to and embraced the organic Coopyouth Movement that has been slowly taking shape.

There is still more work to be done for the voice and perspective of coopyouth to be fully integrated into the intergenerational Cooperative Movement. There are four main themes that reverberate throughout the coopyouth statements. Some of these themes took on more precise and direct language over time, making them far more actionable and accountable. As such, they are now a test of whether or not the Cooperative Movement will respond to youth's calls for change and work.

- Name Capitalism & Other Isms: Youth used direct and less euphemistic language in their statements with regard to naming foes and ills, which is a departure from prevailing movement practice. Specifically, from the coopyouth perspective, the Cooperative Movement is inherently anti-capitalist, and that fact necessarily needs to be expressed in word and deed in order to maintain integrity to the Cooperative Identity. Accordingly, two statements specifically called for the rejection of capitalist behaviors, values, and comparisons by the Cooperative Movement. They also pointed out that there is a tendency for cooperatives and the movement to emulate capitalist enterprises, noting that this was even reflected in how aspects of movement governance and educational events are organized.
- Autonomous Youth Organizations & Roles: A recurring issue within youth organizations at all levels is the bureaucratic member eligibility and approval processes demanded of them by their host or affiliate cooperative institution (e.g. International Cooperative Alliance Global and Regional Boards, National Federations). Often, the affiliate institutions require that youth be paying members of their organization before they are eligible to participate in any youth organizations. This is, candidly, both in opposition to cooperativism and unreasonable. Many of these organizations have membership costs beyond the capacity of most youth, and these entities often have programming and services that are of little to no relevance to individual youth or small youth cooperatives. Still further, this overfocus on a fiscal transaction as the root of membership and participation is deleterious in ways well beyond the relationship between youth and the broader movement. Youth experience this kind of control as a violation of the Fourth Principle and its underlying values. Youth demand that all youth organizations, no matter their source of funding or origin, be allowed to self-determine who can and how people become full members.
- Redistribution of Wealth: Over the years, youth have called for the redistribution of wealth using a range of different word choices until coming into alignment with historical social movement calls for "wealth redistribution" as a potential curative for some of capitalism's harms. The specific ways in which youth have called for this redistribution within the movement include: fully funding coopyouth programs and projects, fully funding the participation costs of youth attending movement events, and prioritizing and funding the participation of other frontline community members (e.g. people of color, the poor, equatorial island residents, queer people) at movement events. The Argentinean movement provides a model for this, as they regularly fund and empower rank and file workers from their national movement to attend international events and meetings.
- Participatory Governance & Education: Youth have consistently self-organized participatory discussion and education sessions, which is in stark contrast to the very conventional presentation styles and performative governance models typically used for international events and meetings. Youth routinely call for the abolition of falsely representational governance models, the renewed use of consensus-based decision-making, a more diversified selection of session styles (e.g. open space discussion, skillshares) that use more accessible education methods (e.g Popular Education) and don't require an attendee to submit a proposal (requiring technological access and special skills) before being allowed to have a meaningful voice in the proceedings.

The collection of coopyouth statements, their interpretation of cooperative philosophy, and the wisdom they represent is a tremendous asset to the intergenerational Cooperative Movement. Youth have more than answered the call by cooperative philosophers of the past to interpret, refine, and restate the Cooperative Identity for themselves within the contemporary context of their lives. The worldview they have so well-presented within these statements was the primary guidance during the writing of this toolkit.

CoopYouth Glossary



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> *Divide and conquer, in our world,*
> *must become define and empower.*
>
> Audre Lorde

INTRODUCTION

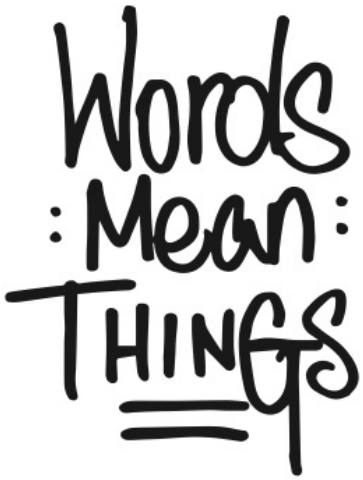
Words have power. For instance, the difference between the words "profit" and "surplus," a common

distinction made within cooperative philosophy, is illustrative of how language can shift mindset and behavior. Theoretically, profit does not exist in a cooperative enterprise, as value is assessed in terms of need. Profit is not a need: anything in excess of what is needed is considered a “surplus.” Instead of getting paid out to individuals automatically, the potential allocations of any surplus are collectively assessed. A worldview that conceptualizes income generated beyond what is needed as “extra” compels very different behavior than one that aspires to maximize that excess to unnecessarily amass individual wealth. Language, particularly in a cooperative context, can represent a world of difference.

The impact one’s choice of language can have on behavior and belief is why this glossary style section is included as a central part of the toolkit, rather than in the back as a reference or addendum. Beyond definitions of words and concepts alongside elaborations of common acronyms, some historical lineage is shared within this “Words Mean Things” section to illustrate why and how specific language usages came to be. A considerable segment of the language intentionally deployed in this publication is not as readily found in other International Cooperative Alliance publications. Specifically, words such as “capitalism,” “neoliberalism,” “revolution,” and “social transformation” are used to name social, political, and economic phenomena directly, while these issues are more frequently referred to euphemistically or vaguely in much of contemporary cooperative literature. History and discussion of these concepts are included throughout this section, especially highlighted within the section “Dirty Words.”

Beyond serving as simply a glossary style reference, this section is also a representation of the philosophical worldview of contemporary coopyouth. There is likely a great deal of ideological difference within the Cooperative Movement that is not readily revealed, let alone understood, because the ways in which different groups and individuals conceive of terms and concepts is not often interrogated. This lack of active discourse and accountability is one factor in the ubiquitousness of nominal cooperatives in the world - which also exist as a result of colonizing nation-states creating false cooperatives to serve their exploitative ends, capitalist enterprises harvesting a marketing advantage through the use of the term, and due to the existence of cooperative legal statutes out of sync with the Cooperative Identity (i.e. an enterprise can incorporate as a cooperative without actually being one). An active and critical discourse around cooperativism is essential to the success and integrity of the philosophy and movement. To restate a sentiment from Ian MacPherson’s article discussing the 1995 Principles revision process - “it is in struggling to understand how the range of possible action implicit in cooperative thought, principles, and practice should be applied in the contemporary experience that cooperators make their contribution” (1998, 253). It is in this spirit that the following section is authored and offered.

Central Concepts



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SUMMARY

Throughout this toolkit there are three key concepts leveraged to explain a number of phenomena within cooperativism:

- Once You've Seen One Cooperative...
- First-Next Step
- *Master's Tools*

These serve as conceptual guidelines for cooperative practice. The first comes from within the cooperative development community of the United States, the second is a humbling orientation of cooperativism that aligns with an element of Marxism, and the third comes from Audre Lorde, a writer and activist from the United States - all three have considerable application within the Cooperative Movement and beyond.

ONCE YOU'VE SEEN ONE COOPERATIVE...

A common refrain heard within cooperative development conversation - "once you've seen one cooperative, you've seen one cooperative" - refers to how there is no one-size-fits-all system design, structure, or solution for every cooperative or any challenge a cooperative may face. It is a simple reminder to development practitioners, or people who help other people set up their own cooperatives, that it is imperative to "meet people where they are at" and not impose any pre-scripted solutions. What system, structure, or solution will be most applicable in a given situation depends on many factors: size of the cooperative group, age of the cooperative, capacities of those involved, location, culture, legal and regulatory realities, etc.

A companion concept to this adage is a reminder that, like cooperatives, people are unique, as are their needs and the various ways they can meet those needs. As a result, people are necessarily experts about their own lives - they understand their own unique needs and ways to meet them better than anyone else. If given sufficient information and opportunity, individuals will always be able to identify what will work best for themselves and their group. This adage acknowledging uniqueness then leads to a call to acknowledge, respect, and uplift the agency of the people with whom you are organizing to identify their unique needs and methods. This is an especially important reminder when working across power imbalances created by education, economic status, age, race, or gender. For elders working with youth, this is something that is often not upheld, resulting in uncooperative, paternalistic relationships. You will see this sentiment employed through the toolkit in a variety of capacities, though its application to intergenerational relationships is the strongest in the context of coopyouth work.

FIRST-NEXT STEP

Cooperatives are not a panacea, they are not an end - rather, they are a "means." A means to what end? The concept of the "first-next step" does not prescribe an end. A core tenet of cooperativism in this context is "striving," the "work" of cooperation is a consistent progression towards ends that we can perhaps name, but do not (yet) know. In the words of Father José Arizmendiarrieta, cooperativist and co-founder of Mondragon - the largest worker cooperative federation in the world, cooperativism "tends towards order which is not static, but is in constant evolution towards a better

form. It is equilibrium in motion. An inert action is a contradiction, and cooperativism, which was borne from action and experience, rather than theory, is something that we must conceive of and desire in the constant search for better forms of expression" (Arizmendiarreta, 1999, 55). The first-next step paradigm perceives cooperativism as the next knowable action towards a better form of expression of humanity; of sentient life.

> *"Cooperativism is not something we should live out as if what is accepted and settled at a given moment were unchangeable. Rather, we should be open to it as an experimental process in which modifications that contribute to updating the means can and should be adopted, while safeguarding the nobility and worthiness of the high ends being pursued. Our own personal evolution and the evolution determined by everything around us, our relationships and coexistence with others, the degree of integrity, seriousness, responsibility, and initiative consolidated through organizational arrangements and experience itself, are new factors that can prompt us to once again review everything about the organization, to better serve the humanist goals we have set" (ibid., 56).*

The orientation towards cooperativism as a striving for the yet unknownable suggests a hopeful, and not necessarily immaterial, metaphysics. It helpfully humbles the work of cooperation while simultaneously orienting cooperative work within a much grander scope and aspiration. The promise of cooperation is that, as a first-next step, it will take us somewhere better than where we are today. We do not yet know what kind of enlightened, truly egalitarian, and expansive reality it can bring about, we know only that it is the path of broad-scale transformation for a world and society that has based its functioning on inequity, material wealth, and "today, the revolution is called participation" (ibid., 81).

The first-next step conception, too, proffers a compassionate viewpoint of all and who have come before this point in our expressions of cooperative thought and practice. "Circumstances, in themselves, are neither good nor bad, simply a reality which we must take into account to be able to act upon them" (ibid., 92). While coopyouth have significant critique for the Cooperative Movement and movement elders, that criticism is not divorced from a compassionate comprehension of what it is to toil for liberation within capitalism and oppressive societal systems. We are where we are at, and together we strive for a better world.

MASTER'S TOOLS

The "master's tools" adage has great bearing on the work of cooperativism within a society in which other conflicting value systems are predominant. The term comes from a speech and essay of Audre Lorde's titled, *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*. The text was

authored for an event convening representatives within the 1970s feminist movement in the United States. In the context of the essay, Lorde critiqued how the feminist movement was still using patriarchal and racist paradigms to shape its work, thereby ensuring its ultimate failure. Within cooperativism, using capitalist models and mechanisms is using the master's tools. An adjacent analogy to Lorde's is that of using a nail instead of a screw to install a cabinet into a wall. The nail is arguably easier and faster to install, and will likely achieve what a screw would accomplish initially and superficially. However, over time and use of the cabinet, the nail is not able to hold up the weight of the cabinet, especially as its doors are opened and shut. "Use the right tools for the right job" is a common adage in multiple cultures and languages, and Lorde powerfully expands upon this very simple concept to elucidate that using - not just the wrong, but - oppressive tools will not only never work to yield sustained liberation, but will also inflict further harm.

In the Cooperative Movement, there are several examples of how the employment of capitalist tools and practices have led to the demutualization of organizations (e.g. agricultural cooperatives and insurance mutuals in the USA during the turn of the century)[1] or the degradation of their character beyond recognition:

> *"In the cooperative sector context, cooperatives do not stand and are not thought of as a modification of capitalism, but essentially as an alternative to it. But in the past, it must be admitted, too much of the development pattern of cooperatives has been dictated by the example and models of capitalist business, as seen by the terminology, structures, methods, and even the titles adopted into the cooperative system" (Laidlaw, 1980, 42).*

Laidlaw, in his report to the 1980 Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance, articulates how the use of capitalist tools and concepts – the master's tools, do not apply in the cooperative context, despite similar nomenclature or other instances of seeming overlap:

> *"It should be noted too that the very nature of a cooperative changes many concepts and methods adopted from other forms of business. A share means one thing in capitalist business but something different in a cooperative. Strong reserves may yield a handsome capital gain in a conventional corporation, but no such gain in a cooperative. So also with profits, competition, dividends, and even advertising, the nature and purpose of cooperatives have the effect of changing these or may do away with them entirely. In the years ahead, the*

growth and survival of cooperatives will likely depend to a great extent on how faithfully they adhere to certain characteristics that identify them as cooperatives" (30).

Various corporate statuses or lack thereof are represented within the case study sample in this publication. The reasons behind the choice or lack thereof to incorporate one way or another are similarly varied. To many, the question of corporate status is somewhat irrelevant, as a large but unknowable number of cooperatives exist without formal legal designation and regulation by the state.[2] It is worth noting that the Cooperative Identity does not speak to corporate status or government partnership, beyond the Fourth Principle which has its historical roots in acknowledging the necessity for autonomy from the government in order for a cooperative to maintain integrity.

Corporate status and governmental relationships are just two examples among many of the master's tools within cooperativism, however, they are especially important because they are the tools most regularly and necessarily employed by cooperatives trading in fiscal capital. While the master's tools concept, advises against using any non-cooperative mechanisms or tools, it is sometimes impossible to entirely opt out of their usage. Following, if a cooperative must employ tools counter to its philosophy, it must do so with an explicit awareness and careful intention. For strategies and stories of how coopyouth have engaged with such realities, review the key issue section "Relationships of Coercion."

[1] Birchall, J. (2000), Some Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Attempted Takeover of a Consumer Cooperative Society. Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, 71: 29-53.
[2] According to a study published by the International Labor Organization in 2018, "Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture," 61% of all workers work within the informal economy.

Definitions

CONTENTS

- EDUCATION
- WORK
- ENTERPRISE
- ECONOMY

SUMMARY

There are several terms and concepts that bear defining in order to ensure understanding of the philosophy and praxis in this toolkit. The explanations range from clear-cut statistical definitions (e.g. “child”) to philosophical interpretations (e.g. what is “work?”). These interpretations are oriented within the lineage of intergenerational cooperative philosophy outlined in the literature review - with special focus on Father Arizmendiarrieta’s contributions which directly named and defined many concepts, as well as the coopyouth philosophy espoused via the collection of coopyouth statements. In essence, much of this “Definitions” section and the following “Isms” section are a presentation of the coopyouth perspective on cooperativism, supported by elder philosophers and leaders.

(COOP)YOUTH

Within the International Cooperative Alliance, the Global Youth Network identifies “youth" as all people up to 35 years old. This definition was, saliently, determined for and by youth cooperativists. No lower bound is identified, but there are some other measures that inform a lower bound indirectly. Of additional consideration in the above definition:

- Need to distinguish between children and youth: Organizing and advocating for children is necessarily different from doing so for older youth, given their respective needs and priorities. For example, children are more consistently and categorically denied their personal agency throughout the world than youth; which greatly shapes how to organize and support each identity group. That said, there is some overlap between “children” and “youth” needs and identities, but children and youth are typically able to self-identify which programs or groups best serve them.
    - Internationally, children are defined as anyone up to age 18, per the Declaration on the Rights of the Child authored by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It is worth noting that the Convention still affirms prison as an appropriate form of punishment for children, and that children as young as 15 are allowed to fight in wars. Despite the protections outlined in this Convention, children are not allowed to vote or participate in political processes, nor are they allowed to serve on the juries that often decide their fates.
- Relationship to Other Definitions: The international Cooperative Movement is unique among other international movements insofar as it has a century-old membership organization. As a result, its peer organizations, in terms of scale and scope, are by and large Intergovernmental Organizations: the United Nations, International Labor Organization, the G8 and G20, International Workers of the World Union, and their affiliates. A few of those within that peer group of scale and scope that define “youth” within their work provide the following guiding definitions:
    - United Nations & Agencies: youth are aged 15-24
    - African Youth Charter: youth are aged 15-35
    - UNICEF: childhood ends at age 18
- Legal Age of Adulthood: In many places worldwide, children cannot be legally recognized owners of an enterprise (i.e. members of an incoporated cooperative) until they achieve legal “adulthood” (often age 17 or 18). Not all cooperatives incorporate with a regulatory entity, but for those that do, these legal constraints limit who can participate in a cooperative. In the context of formal (i.e. legally incorporated cooperatives), the lower age bound for coopyouth aligns with legal adulthood, while those cooperatives who choose or are forced to remain part of the informal economy may engage youth younger than the legal age of adulthood.

Some aspects of the “youth" identity and life phase that are important to keep in mind:

- Shifts In Financial Status: During this period of life, most people shift how and from where they obtain the financial resources they need to survive. Sometimes this means an individual being financially independent for the first time, as they cease being financially supported by their family. Other times, it can mean shifting from a regime of individual financial responsibility to shared responsibility within a marriage. As family structures or living arrangements change, young individuals must take on an increasing amount of financial obligation, many for the first time in their lives (e.g. paying for housing).
- Historical Movement Building Role: Youth have built collective power and agitated against injustice all over the world throughout history. Most recently, youth organizing helped to bring about the Arab Spring, the Ferguson uprisings, the Quebec Student Revolution, Nigeria’s youth protests against police brutality, and the direct calls led by students and youth to end militarization in Indonesia. While not every youth considers themselves a revolutionary or even sees value in agitation work, this has been one of young peoples’ most notable contributions to world history and societal progress. The reasons that youth engage in movement building often have to do with having “less to lose” in terms of resources, more energy and fewer daily responsibilities, as well as bearing the brunt of many of the injustices perpetrated by the older ruling class. For some, this period of life also brings individuals into direct contact with oppressive and inequitable systems of power for the first time, after being somewhat shielded by a family system or geographic isolation. For elders, over time, a person can become acclimated to injustice, especially as individuals’ earning potential often increases the more work experience they accumulate over time.[1] This often shifts individual incentives for movement building, as priorities change and people have “more to lose.” *The cooperative movement should strive to understand the politicization of youth through this material lens, rather than through infantilizing understandings of youth radicalization as a “phase.”*

[1] Lazear, E. (1976). Age, Experience, and Wage Growth. The American Economic Review, 66(4), 548-558. Retrieved June 15, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1806695

STUDENT

An identity that often overlaps with youth in the Cooperative Movement is that of student. In many corners of the Cooperative Movement, "student" cooperators have been engaged to represent youth, at-large, given this overlap. However, the majority of youth in the world are not students, nor do the majority of people in the world receive formal education during their youth life phase. And, increasingly, the cooperative model is of interest to those without access to advanced educational opportunities that can then put them at a disadvantage in pursuing conventional employment. The evolution of the Coopyouth Movement internationally is somewhat a reflection of this shift -- that students are a subset of youth, and are not sufficient representatives for youth, at-large.

Institutional Relationship: Coopyouth who additionally identify as students are most often, though not exclusively, those pursuing post-secondary education (e.g. university). As a result, coopyouth students face issues navigating a relationship with an educational institution that feels very intimate and intense, as it relates to their efforts towards self-betterment and/or pursuing a livelihood. In contrast to the other institutions with which youth may be coming face to face for the first time (e.g. nation-state, banks), colleges and universities ostensibly serve a majority youth student population, which can engender a very different kind of relationship and interaction that is more empowered and rightly entitled.

Transitory: Besides a unique relationship with an institution, another key aspect of the student identity is its transitory nature (as with youth!). Those organizing in student communities are examples of people doing work for more than just themselves, as student tenures tend to turn over at a higher rate than (educational) institutions can enact changes in policy or behavior.

Of the key issues coopyouth face, the key issue discussions of "Relationships of Coercion," "Relationships of Solidarity," and "Membership Transition" are of extra importance for those who are also students.

EDUCATION, WORK, & ENTERPRISE

The concepts of education, work, and enterprise have been distorted within mainstream society, to the extent their most common usages are now a reflection of capitalist ideals. "Education" is typically interpreted in an institutional sense, with regard to pursuing credentials from a formal educational institution. Those credentials, then, have currency when pursuing "employment" - or working for someone else, which has become falsely interchangeable with "work." "Enterprise," similarly, has come to be understood as "business," though the term has a much broader application. The following section regrounds the concepts both in their grander historical interpretations, as well as those of cooperative philosophers and practitioners.

Education

Learning happens in all arenas of life; it is not a process relegated to formal educational institutions like universities and colleges. Father Arizmendiarietta, founder of the largest worker cooperative federation in the world, effectively initiated the federation's first cooperative via an educational group that has now evolved into a university that still exists today. While his work has evolved into a formal educational institution over the past century, it began from a simple study group. He believed, "teaching and education are the primary undertakings of a community" and "the key to the fate and future of our young people and of our society" (1999, 48-49).

Within most conventional discussions of education, the value of education is measured by how "employable" it makes a person. Part of this corruption of education by capitalist values is the rise of "credentialism" within the job market. Many higher paying jobs have a baseline eligibility requirement for an applicant to have achieved a certain level of education and have a credential to demonstrate that achievement. In many places throughout the world, these kinds of credential education programs cost a considerable amount of money (e.g. university/tertiary degree). Rather than positioning education as a path of personal development and a way to enrich one's life, it restricts it to a narrow role of elevating one's economic status - if one can afford the correct credential and find a relevant job.

- Banking & Popular Education: Not only has education, as a concept, been distorted away from its more expansive role within society, so, too, have methods of "teaching." In both the 2014 and 2015 CoopYouth statements, more participatory information sharing methods were called for, which was a critique of the Cooperative Movement's predominant use of conventional "banking" forms of education at its events. Banking education perceives the learner as a bank in which information is to be deposited and maintained. It does not engage the learner as an equitable partner in the process, and it suggests that what is being shared is static knowledge - not to be changed or challenged. The term "banking education" was coined by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogía del oprimido,* in which he also outlined the concepts of "Popular Education," which is "...a philosophical and pedagogical approach, which understands education as a participatory and transformative process, in which learning and conceptualization are based on the practical experience of the people and groups participating in training processes."[1]

Cooperativism, similar to Popular Education philosophy, perceives education as a constant striving undertaken throughout one's life, as an integral part of the human experience, and for which no credential can be purchased or awarded.

Work

First and foremost, in the context of this toolkit and cooperativism, as a discourse, "work" is not synonymous with "employment." Employment refers to a relationship a person can enter into with

another person ("employer") or themselves ("self-employment"), in order to acquire money in exchange for their labor. Work is, instead, a much grander and universal concept. Father Arizmendiarrieta, in *Pensamientos*, put forth several powerful descriptions that speak to the full expression of this conception of work:

- "Work is the characteristic expression of the human species;"
- "Work is interpreted as intelligent action on nature, transforming it into a good, into something useful;"
- "Work is, above all, a service to the community and a way of developing the person;"
- "Work is a path of personal and communal self-realization, individual perfection, and collective improvement; it is the epitome of an unquestionable social and humanist consciousness; and"
- "The problem of our day is not how to find a way to escape work, but instead how to make work a service, and, where possible, a source of honest satisfaction. Work can and should be humanized" (1999, 62, 65, 67).

While the economic character of cooperative work is incredibly essential, its highest purpose is self-realization and collective liberation; matters of thriving, rather than just surviving within a harmful economic system by being employed in service to that system and its minority beneficiaries.

Enterprise

Arizmendiarrieta continues to flesh out the cooperative conception of work and begins to touch on the ever important "enterprise;" the organizational description chosen for inclusion in the Cooperative Identity.

- "Work is not a punishment from God, but proof of God's trust in people, making them his collaborators. [...] In other words, God makes people members of his enterprise, of the marvelous enterprise that is creation" (1999, 62-63).
- "Work is the attribute that awards us the highest honor ofbeing a cooperator with God in the transformation and cultivation of nature and in the consequent advancement of human welfare. The fact that people exercise their faculty of working in union with their peersand in a structure of noble cooperation and solidarity gives them not only nobility, but also the optimal productivity to make every corner of the earth a pleasant and promising mansion for all. That is what work communities are for, and they are destined to help our people advance" (1999, 65).

Enterprise, with this cooperative framing, is not synonymous with "business." Rather, enterprises are "work communities" or social units in which education and training are the primary aims and mechanisms of collective effort. Cooperative understanding of education, work, and enterprise build on one another to create a social system that continually generates self- and group- actualization. Applying this framework to concepts such as "economy," "movement," and "community" can be incredibly transformative to one's worldview, breaking it free from "capitalist realism," or a widespread sense that capitalism has and always will be the only way in which to structure society.[2]

[1] https://sites.google.com/site/conceptosdeeducacionpopular/concepto-de-e...
[2] For a deeper discussion of "capitalist realism," refer to the "Capitalism" sub-section of "Isms."

ECONOMY

An "economic system" or "economy" broadly encompasses production, distribution, or consumption in a given geographic area. In an increasingly digital world, more economies are coming into existence that are not geographically distinguishable (e.g. clout economy, in which social influence is redefined as digital commodity, *theoretically* available to excahnge in a marketplace of arbitrary values). Production, distribution, and consumption of goods (including currency) and services may

happen in a single household that can be delineated as part of several different economies, some trading in fiscal capital and some not:

- Sue agrees to follow her sister's crush on Twitter if she posts an announcement for her upcoming event in exchange (clout)
- Stephen sells his old bike, which he received as a gift, to a friend from school for $200 (informal)
- Saiorse orders a hair clip she saw at the store for $5 on Amazon.com for $3 (formal)
- The neighbor brings over an apple pie after their tree has a bumper crop (gift)

Essentially, economic systems have relatively arbitrary bounds of definition that are selected according to what kinds of exchange the person defining the system wants to explore. Exchange of goods, services, and various forms of capital happens in an incalculable number of ways at an even more so incalculable rate. Study of economy is simply an endeavor to try to comprehend and conceptualize all of these infinite exchanges across time and space; however futile it may seem.

Some of the various overlapping and intertwining categories used in economic classification are as follows, with this list focusing on more general categorizations rather than specific, niche system concepts:

- Informal – investment, production, and distribution beyond the scope of government oversight or regulation
- Formal – investment, production, and distribution tracked and regulated by government
- Gift – giving away goods, services, or wealth without obligating a return of any kind (though typically return occurs "voluntarily" according to unenforced social norms)
- Barter – exchanges of goods or services without the intervention of currency
- Planned or Command – investment, production, and distribution is dictated by a central government
- Unplanned or Market – investment, production, and distribution is dictated by "supply and demand" (e.g. if there is a large supply and little demand, prices are low)
- Mixed Economy – A blending of various economic systems, which is generally present in all geographies throughout the world

The iceberg graphic was developed to illustrate the diversity and arbitrariness of defined economic systems. The visible,

above water portion of the iceberg identifies those forms of economic activity most named in our day to day lives, while the hidden, underwater portion of the iceberg lists a whole range of economic systems and activity that happen everywhere everyday but are not well accounted for in our conversations or imaginations.

The cooperative enterprise, based on Principles and Values, does not belong to any specific economy. Cooperatives have existed "under all kinds of governments, within every kind of economy, and amid all the divisions [...] that typify the human condition" (MacPherson, 1998, 219). Cooperatives exist in the formal (regulated by government) and informal (unregulated) economies. "The boundaries between formal and informal are not as important to organizations that are used to dealing in the market economy as a whole."[1] In fact, as is discussed in the "Dirty Words" discussion later in this section, a common misunderstanding many people have is that "marketplace" is synonymous with "capitalism," when the truth is that there are many kinds of economic exchanges that can take place in any given marketplace and marketplaces may overlap, as illustrated in the household example above.

1 Birchall, J. "Organizing Workers in the Informal Sector." (2001), p.viii

Isms

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Naming "capitalism" and "neoliberalism," in particular, have been historically taboo within the

contemporary Cooperative Movement, with a few exceptions. One such exception was A F Laidlaw, author of a report commissioned by the Board of the International Cooperative Alliance to its Congress in 1980, who openly discussed "grasping capitalism" as one of cooperativism's two biggest threats and positioned the end of capitalism is a cooperative goal:

> *"Cooperatives were started solely as an alternative to private business or capitalism. The pioneers of the movement spoke of and planned for the day when the cooperative system of business would gradually win over so many followers, it would be in a dominant position, and would then exert its influence in all fields and finally build a cooperative commonwealth" (41).*

The Cooperative Movement uses precise language to explain what it supports and aims to further in its Statement on the Cooperative Identity, but much of it hesitates to explicitly name what our movement works to resist and transform.

Within the worker and youth segments of our movement, there has been far less hesitation to "define and empower."[1] Specifically, during the International Summit on Cooperatives in 2014, the coopyouth contingent issued a statement titled *Cooperate to Transform Society* -

> *"We believe that there is an alternative to the capitalist economy. We want to be part of a cooperative movement that critiques the current system and actively rejects its focus on limitless growth. This means not emulating its institutions, looking to its leadership and theory for guidance, or staffing the management teams of our cooperatives with subscribers to neoliberal philosophy."*

This is just one illustration of coopyouth struggling to compel the movement to be more direct in its language and aims. Often, when coopyouth seek to antagonistically identify capitalism and neoliberalism as value systems that need to be dismantled, they are disrespected, written off as impractical, and they or their views are silenced by elders. Examples of this can be found in key issue sections on "Relationships of Coercion," "Social Transformation," and "Capital."

[1] Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." Sister Outsider. For more on this concept, refer to earlier in the section "Central Concepts."

COOPERATIVISM

The philosophy and practices emergent from the Cooperative Identity constitute "cooperativism," which has evolved not only from a more than century long tradition dating back the the Rochdale Equitable Society of Pioneers, but is a formalized expression of instinctually and intentionally cooperative social systems throughout human history.[1] While much of the natural human compulsion for cooperation has been eclipsed by society's prevailing individualism, there are some communities in which a cooperative approach still drives relationships. Many indigenous communities, in particular, have struggled against colonizers, settlers, and modern multinational corporations, while still managing to maintain communitarian value systems.[2] Even within communities wholly shaped by capitalism or explicitly non-communitarian value systems, humans will spontaneously or organically cooperate.[3], [4] A significant reason for why the work and traditions of RESP were sufficiently preserved over time to shape a global movement is because, while they were economically oppressed, they were "safe" from the violent mechanisms of white supremacy, in particular, ensuring their written history and practices were much less likely to be forgotten or destroyed.

An early 20th century quote, sourced from a newsletter of a consumers' cooperative in Great Britain that emerged from the RESP and is included in the *Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles*, speaks to this history clearly:

> *"The development of the idea of cooperation in the 19th century can best be understood as an attempt to make explicit a principle that is inherent in the constitution of society, but which has been forgotten in the turmoil and disintegration of rapid economic progress."*

The need for this natural human compulsion to be formalized and codified in some way is owed to capitalism's bureaucratizing impulses. In some ways, while capitalism forced cooperativism to formalize itself as an explicit value system, making the model explicit has both allowed for the value system to be interrogated and improved over time, thereby serving as an ideological life raft for many as capitalism has intensified.

As a value system, cooperativism drives individual behavior, which drives relationships, and, in turn, shapes social systems and their norms. Cooperativism is *not* a checklist of organizational or structural characteristics, it is not simply a business model, it is not an economic scheme, nor is it a "kinder, gentler capitalism." Cooperativism is a philosophy that supports the survival and thriving of sentient life and the life on which that depends, without being prescriptive about what that should look like, beyond how we should treat and relate to one another in a systemized fashion.

[1] For more on the Cooperative Identity, refer to the according section in the Literature Review, as well as the section reviewing Ian MacPherson's address to the 1995 Congress of the International Cooperative Alliance in Manchester, England.
[2] Estes, Nick. Our History Is The Future. Verso Books, 2019.
[3] Gelderloos, Peter. Anarchy Works. Ak Press, 2015.
[4] Ostrom, Elinor. Governing the Commons. Cambridge University Press, 1990.

CAPITALISM

Capitalism is a system of personal values that dictate social, political, and – most obviously to most

people – economic decisions and behaviors. Capitalist values include: profit above all other things, private property as necessary and good, individualism, and extreme self-sufficiency. Throughout the world today, capitalism is the predominant socio-economic system that defines the institutions which shape much of how our societies function - family structures, government, housing systems, as well as, and very importantly, water management, and food production and distribution, to name a few.

As a system, it is so pervasive that it has sullied how we conceive of ourselves, others, and our relationships. In many languages, "self-worth" is discussed not as something inherent, but as something that needs to be created by being "productive" - e.g. having a "good" job, earning "enough" money. Similarly, relationships are "invested" in, and that investment is often tracked in a way that is transactional in nature - e.g. "I have invested so much time and effort in my relationship with her, and I feel like that has not been sufficiently reciprocated" or "I, the man, bought dinner on this date, I expect my date, a femme, to have sex with me." In the latter example, it is especially apparent how capitalism reinforces and is upheld by other perverse and harmful value systems, the patriarchy in this instance. Capitalism has influenced the way we feel, think, and talk about ourselves and each other. The reach of capitalism's socio-economic paradigm is so extreme, it has resulted in a prevailing sense that the way society is structured and interpreted is the only possible way in which to operate and relate to one another. This phenomenon is called capitalist realism; it and its impact on the Cooperative Movement is outlined in greater detail in the "Dirty Words" section.

COLONIALISM

As an international movement, it is imperative to be explicit about discussing the process, impacts, and continued expression and expansion of capitalism on a global scale via colonialism and imperialism. Colonialism was the driving force by which our world became "globalized." Colonization is the process by which people go to another place to subjugate and exploit the people and resources of that place in order to extract value for personal gain and/or for the benefit of the government or business that financed their efforts. This process often involves establishing a formal political outpost of their home nation in the new location, which is called a "colony." Outlined later in this section is a discussion of "Corporatism," including how the Dutch East Indies Corporation, perhaps the most infamous colonizing endeavor that subjected an entire corner of the globe, was the first known corporate structure after which all corporate structures are modeled.

Of important note to the Cooperative Movement, some of the largest cooperatives' origins, as well as the broader legacy of the movement in certain parts of the world have direct ties to colonialism. Ian MacPherson, in his background paper to the 1995 revision of the Cooperative Identity, notes that "many of the largest cooperatives of the late twentieth century had their roots in th[e] settlement experience" and those nominal cooperative traditions outside Europe "started through the direct action of imperial and colonial governments" (1998, 224). This history cannot be ignored, forgotten, or its enduring impacts underestimated if the Cooperative Movement is to truly live up to its values and progress towards a better world.

GLOBALIZATION

The process by which the exchange of ideas, goods, and services become wholly internationalized can be understood as "globalization." As this process began via colonization, globalization has created new methods of colonization and, as a result, some of its mechanisms are referred to as "neocolonialism." This contemporary expansion and increase of exchange globally is the outgrowth of the long and painful process of colonization and the slave trade, both of which shape economic and political dynamics to this day. As testament to this lineage, many of today's multi-national corporations have roots in the slavery and the oppression of scores of people, by using materials created or processed using slave labor, creating insurance policies for slave owners to compensate

them for the death or "loss" of an enslaved person. JP Morgan Chase admitted during this century that previous iterations of their bank accepted slaves as collateral.[1]

In the past century, globalization has been spurred by technological improvements in transportation and communications, allowing for people and their conversations to travel great distances in an extremely short period of time. While some scholars conceptualize different branches or types of globalization (e.g. cultural), it is first and foremost a function of economic exchange. Cultural or political extension and expansion were pursued primarily for the financial benefits that could be gained via international trade and exploitation. Following, economic and political philosophy have also become globalized, particularly those that justify the predominant methods and modes of globalization harmful to many (e.g. neoliberalism), in the last several decades.

[1] https://www.bbc.com/news/business-49476247

NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism is an ideological revival of "liberalism," an ideology articulated by Scottish economist Adam Smith. His 1776 book, *A Wealth of Nations*, called for the cessation of all government involvement in economic activity, in order for all exchange to be "free" or "liberal" (e.g. no exchange rates, tariffs, taxes, restrictions or regulation of commercial activities, etc.). This value of "free exchange" facilitated processes of colonization and violent exploitation of the world by its wealthiest and, most often, whitest nations. This was facilitated not only by the refusal of regulation by government entities, but also in the ideology's inherent ties to white supremacy and anthropocentrism that supported its assertion that the individual trader was accountable to no one - especially not those people being colonized or exploited, nor to the supporting ecosystem.

Following the Great Depression, there was a resurgence of government intervention in trade, which – for a time – limited the amount of profit that could be made by exploitative economic actors. In the latter part of the 20th century, neoliberal ideology began to shape economic policy in the United States, as legislators crafted legislative responses to the 1970s economic recession. Its employment by politicians brought about the destruction of welfare systems and economic protections for the most vulnerable in wealthier nations (e.g. the United States, Canada, parts of Europe), as well as the intensification of exploitation of the world's poor by the more wealthy.

At its most basic, neoliberalism is the renewed shift of nation-states and governments to shrink themselves to be wholly in service to the goals and values of capitalist philosophy and practice.[1] Neoliberalism is both encompassed by and facilitates capitalism, as it is most commonly employed to refer to the aspect of capitalist philosophy that drives the creation of legislation and policy that entrenches and justifies capitalism in its scarily influential societal role. In recent decades and today, supranational organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are the institutions that introduce and enforce neoliberalism in the "developing world" through programs framed as economic development assistance initiatives.[2] Due to these programs and their associated loans, many poor nation-states persist in a state of perpetual debt to these institutions controlled by representatives of wealthy nation-states, preserving a state of extreme inequality and power imbalance in global political and economic systems. Those with the power in these systems have no incentives to relinquish any control, thereby restricting the potential actions that can be taken by the debtor nation-states to achieve any level of self-sufficiency or liberation from external control.

[1] "What is Neoliberalism? A Brief Definition for Activists." Elizabeth Martinez and Arnoldo Garcia, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.
[2] Lourdes, Benería; Gunseli, Berik; Maria S., Floro (2016). Gender, Development, and Globalization: Economics as if all people mattered. New York: Routledge. p. 95.

IMPERIALISM

The relationship between capitalism and neoliberalism is very similar to that of colonialism and imperialism, insofar as imperialism is the extension of colonialism's socio-economic mechanisms into the political and legislative arenas in order to institutionalize and moralize its functioning. By "legalizing" exploitation and violence, it has the complementary effect of "moralizing" the behavior, as many people subscribe to the notion that "legality = morality," which then excuses a range of violent and oppressive practices. Imperialism's, as well as colonialism's, history and current operation are of particular relevance to the Cooperative Movement, given its international scope, the essentialism of economic exchange and relationship in its work, and the necessity of navigating international relationships historically defined by the functioning of those systems. As discussed in the other parts of this section, today's supranational political and economic infrastructure (e.g. United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization) are manifestations of colonization and its modern day heirs, capitalism and neoliberalism. These global institutions are explicitly or implicitly controlled by those nation-states and strongly influenced by the world's wealthiest individuals and corporations. Cooperativism seeks to build commonwealths, not empires, so engaging with institutions with aspirations for empire can be dangerous - "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."

CORPORATISM

A corporation is a type of organization that is sanctioned by the state to operate as a "legal person." Its etymology is rooted in the Latin word "corporare": to combine into one body. It is related to the modern word, corporeal, which refers to both having a body and things that relate to having a body (e.g. corporeal pleasure). In a legal context, corporations are people, which affords them the same protections and rights a human would have. A common rallying cry by people in opposition to corporate power is "corporations are not people!" The paradigm of personhood for a corporation has become more complex as time has passed:

> *"As the medieval baron in his castle held sway over the feudal age, so the business magnate from the corporate boardroom rules society in the modern age. The main difference today is that the corporate power is generally hidden and inaccessible. It may be irresponsible, and no one can be quite sure where this power begins and ends. It is often uncontrollable, and unlike political power cannot be voted out or impeached. Indeed, in Western society corporate power sometimes overrides government and the state" (Laidlaw, 1980, 25).*

The origins of the corporate structure are firmly embedded in colonialism and slavery, within capitalism's lineage. The Dutch East India Company, or Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), is widely considered the first corporation in the world, and it resulted from the government-mandated merger of several trading companies in the Netherlands. The activities carried out by the company involved imposing themselves on East Asian communities, while massacring and enslaving

peoples whenever “necessary.” Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the VOC's de facto chief executive, to the the VOC's board of directors, in 1614 -

> *“Your Honours know by experience that trade in Asia must be driven and maintained under the protection and favour of Your Honours' own weapons, and that the weapons must be paid for by the profits from the trade; so that we cannot carry on trade without war nor war without trade.”*[1]

The VOC reigned in this way in order to exploit the labor and natural resources of those places, and established Dutch outposts or “colonies” in support of those efforts. Their colonizing activities in the region were so intensive that the concept of a “VOC World” took hold, which broadly considers the VOC to be a company-state – comparable to a nation-state – eclipsing other pre-existing distinctions between space and peoples.[2]

Depending on the jurisdiction, some cooperatives in the world have the option to incorporate into a corporate entity that is specifically designed by legislators according to what they interpret a cooperative to be. It is not uncommon for these “cooperative corporate statutes” to be unfit for actual cooperatives, as there is a well known knowledge gap about cooperatives both within the movement and beyond it in the public realm.[3] Even when this is an option, some cooperatives will forego the formal cooperative incorporation because the statute is too restrictive or they are ineligible for some reason other than their relationship to the Cooperative Identity. Those that forego the cooperative statute but still choose to incorporate, as well as those without any nominally cooperative statute option, may use conventional corporate statutes and, as a result, be considered and treated by the government as conventional capitalist enterprises. It is then up to the cooperative to ensure their integrity by imbuing their governing documents and organizational practices with the Cooperative Identity.

> *“Legal requirements and corporate structure may also distort the true nature of a cooperative, which is essentially much closer to an association than a corporation” (Laidlaw, 1980, 30).*

However, an important reason why many choose to take on a corporate designation or advocate for this practice is that it brings the cooperative fully into the “formal” economy, or the activities of exchange in a given jurisdiction that are monitored and regulated by the government. This, on its own, doesn’t sound that appealing, but in more “developed” countries, corporate status can be a requirement for opening a bank account, signing a lease, and all manner of operational transactions. Still further, in some, but not all, countries and regions – becoming a member of the formal economy grants you access to certain social services and safety nets. That said, 61% of all workers in the world operate within the informal economy.[4] It is unknown what portion of those working beyond the scope of economic regulation live under governmental regimes that have any form of welfare or social benefit for participation in the formal economy for which they might

otherwise be eligible.

"GOVERNANCE 'VS.' OPERATIONS"

Many other concepts related to that of the corporation also came from the aforementioned VOC, including the Board of Directors, which is today a governance structure used by capitalist enterprise, other private sector organizations, non-profit organizations, the public sector, and cooperatives. Its base intention is to buffer the governance and strategic decision-making of the organization from its day to day activities or "operations." This separation is often made and justified as a protective mechanism, to limit the possibility of corruption and distance the discussion of long-term organizational interests from the short-term demands of running an enterprise. How Directors are selected to the Board vary by organization, though there are general trends across sectors:

- For-Profit: Typically, the executive staff members of the corporation are placed on the Board automatically, with the remainder of the Directors elected by the existing directors or, in publicly held organizations, the shareholders. Of important note in the election process is that the existing Board, via a nominating committee, most typically selects who is put up for election, i.e. elections are not free and open. As a result, most of those Directors who are nominated are representatives of strategic profit interests of the corporation or majority shareholders. Still further, given that one share equals one vote in conventional shareholder corporations, while all shareholders can vote in an election, minority shareholders have no real power and decisions are effectively made by majority shareholders.

- Non-Profit: Practices vary widely across these kinds of organizations, but most non-profit Boards perpetuate themselves by recruiting their own new members. Elections for these seats may or may not be held, though if they are held it is often purely symbolic in nature or in order to satisfy a regulatory requirement. The major donors are often recruited to fill seats on the Board. In the instance a major donor is a corporation, a representative from that corporation is placed on the Board. Sometimes seats are given to a representative of the non-profit's beneficiaries.

- Cooperatives/Membership Organizations (including some non-profits): Directors are elected from the membership by the membership, typically through a nomination process and committee that varies by organization and is far more transparent than that of for-profit entities. In some instances, membership organizations will appoint an outside director, with full or limited voting power, as a connection to the broader community or an affiliated issue (e.g. student housing cooperative placing a representative from the local college on the Board).

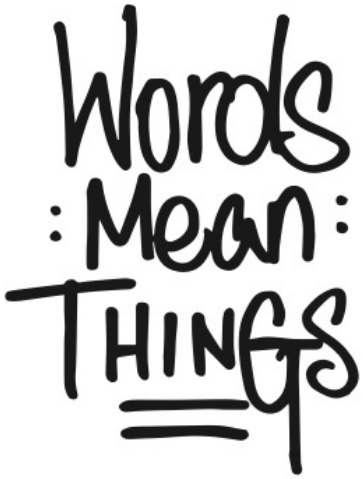
In most visible and large cooperatives throughout the world, a Board of Directors is installed to supervise and perpetuate the cooperative as its steward of the cooperative's "governance" activities. However, a Board is not an inherent characteristic of a cooperative and is, as we have seen, an outgrowth of an entirely different value system. As a result, there are an infinite number of other ways in which governance can be apportioned and managed in a cooperative, including ways in which it is not considered necessarily independent and removed from the day to day activities of the organization. Youth cooperatives, often having fewer members and being more innovative due to their nascent phase of organizational life, in particular, have creatively employed a range of unconventional ways to structure governance in their cooperatives in relation to operations, some of which are outlined in the key issue section "Structure and Participation."

[1] Phillips, Andrew; Sharman, J.C.: International Order in Diversity: War, Trade and Rule in the Indian Ocean. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, ISBN 9781107084834), p. 109

[2] This heralds to the Cooperative Movement's contemporary attempts to be included in some fashion within the G20 and United Nations, which could set a precedent similar to that of the VOC company-state and usher in a world order in which sizable corporations, such as Amazon, may feel entitled to a seat at the global government table due to their economic power.

[3] For example, many cooperative statutes throughout the world require a cooperative to have 5 or 10 members in order to incorporate, which prohibits many small, worker-oriented cooperatives ineligible.
[4] “Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture,” ILO (2018)

Dirty Words?



> *In the face of good and evil, or justice and injustice, there can be no hesitation.*
>
> Father José Arizmendiarrieta

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the cooperative movement today, you will not find much explicit conversation of capitalism, colonialism, globalization, and related topics outside of youth, poor, and worker - oriented spaces. Why is this the case, when these are the very systems that have created the ills of institutionalized poverty, oppression of identities, and destructive individualism that the movement works to address? There are several potential explanations for why certain segments of our cooperative movement do not use systems language to name our shared foes and threats, and may even seek to alienate those who do so. Many of the included explanations work hand in hand with each other - specifically, "Insufficient Education" combines with most, as many of these issues can be addressed with better education.

THE COLD WAR EXPERIENCE

The latter half of the 20th century was ideologically divisive. During the course of the Cold War, which began in 1947, a faux binary between capitalism and socialism (most often referred to just as a type of socialism, "communism"), as the only two possible economic models possible, became standard orthodoxy, especially among the Baby Boomer generation. Compounding this false notion of only capitalism or communism was the misconception that "capitalism" implied "democracy" and "socialism/communism" implied "authoritarianism." When the most powerful socialist/communist states fell in the early 1990s, all communal values and practices were given a bad name, and they were steadily replaced by capitalist values of individualism and meritocracy. As a result, socialism, especially communism, became and remains a persecuted ideology throughout much of the world, even leading to "Red Scares" in capitalist strongholds like the United States in which individuals were blacklisted socially and professionally for allegedly showcasing sympathy towards communist or socialist projects.

This corrupted ideological framework imposed by the Cold War has impacted many of our cooperative movement comrades - both in their likely earnest subscription to an oversimplified and inaccurate "capitalism/democracy vs communism/authoritarianism" worldview, as well as instilling a fear of potentially divisive language as it harkens them back to a sustained period of global, ideological warfare. As an example of cooperative discourse prior to this, A F Laidlaw's 1980 report to the ICA Congress openly and clearly named and blamed capitalism for many societal ills. Cooperative philosophy coming after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991 largely ceases to do so.

Of incredibly important note on this topic is the stigma still associated with the name "cooperative" in those areas where authoritarian states were in power during the Cold War. Such regimes often utilized exclusively nominal cooperatives to oppress and bring about conformity to the society designed by the regime, giving cooperatives a bad name and fostering distrust of the Identity still today.

CAPITALIST REALISM

Capitalism is so dominant in our world that it is difficult to even imagine another value system driving our societies. Most living people today have spent the majority of their collective lives within social, political, and economic systems shaped by capitalism. Mark Fisher, who coined the term capitalist realism, describes it as "the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it" (2009, 6). Despite that those of us in the Cooperative Movement are purportedly working to envision and enact a value system to support social, political, and economic systems that directly conflict with those of capitalism and its underpinning values, some within the movement are still beholden to this sense of capitalist realism. This is because capitalist realism is such a powerful force; it frames all of our experiences no matter who we are or where we are in the world. We see capitalist realism manifest within the Cooperative Movement when cooperators name cooperativism as a "kinder, gentler form of capitalism," or when cooperators argue that simply because cooperativism can operate in a marketplace it *is* capitalism.

BUSINESS ONTOLOGY

A subset of capitalist realism that is insidious within the Cooperative Movement is "business ontology" or the notion that everything must be a business. Neoliberalism, with its endeavors to shrink the state – often through privatization of essential services – is an example of the "business-ification" or commercialization of society. Mutual aid and all the organizations, networks, events, enterprises, and relationships that are created out of instinctual cooperation are not inherently or necessarily businesses. Cooperative enterprise is not synonymous with business, though it does not necessarily preclude businesses from being cooperative enterprises. "The real difference between cooperation and other kinds of economic organizations resides precisely in its subordination of business techniques to ethical ideas. Apart from this difference, the movement has no fully satisfactory reason for its existence" (Laidlaw, 1980, 38). There is nothing within the *Cooperative*

Identity that implies a cooperative must be a business, must be a legally regulated entity, or must be incorporated. Overtime, due to the all encompassing onslaught of capitalist realism and business ontology, many in the Cooperative Movement simply began to assume and imply that cooperatives are synonymous with businesses. The business ontology aspect of capitalist realism has been, perhaps, the most harmful to the cooperative movement throughout the last century.

SYSTEM OF PRESUMED VIRTUE

Ultimately, it has been and must continue to be stated explicitly that there are many cooperatives and cooperators in the world only nominally embody the *Cooperative Identity*. There are enterprises legally incorporated as a cooperative and/or using "cooperative" in their name or marketing, but they behave in ways that are counter to the *Cooperative Identity* and its extensive and coherent philosophy.[1] Some individuals involved in these enterprises may truly believe they are cooperatives due to insufficient cooperative education, as well as the overwhelming predominance of capitalism as an unchecked inherency and ideal within all forms of economic education. Many cooperators "are not usually disposed to enquire deeply into the beliefs which they spread, for they assume they already have the true faith and need search no further" - this has been referred to as a 'system of presumed virtue'" (Laidlaw, 1980, 32). In other words, just because what they are doing is called or named cooperative, people assume what they are doing is comprehensively in alignment with cooperativism when it, in fact, is not. Others may be fully aware of their practice of nominal cooperativism, but may be doing so in order to benefit from "coop-washing" their endeavor or may be actively working to demutualize the cooperative. It is, then, of no surprise that these individuals will – consciously or not - defend and resist the naming of their behaviors as uncooperative or capitalistic because they are operating within a "system of presumed virtue."

[1] "The Wyoming-Minnesota Model: Two Case Studies" David Massaglia, Bemidji State University, Minnesota; presented at the ACE Conference (Austin, Texas; 2016).

INSUFFICIENT EDUCATION

Much of the defensiveness and discourse around whether or not cooperativism is in opposition to or seeking to transform capitalism simply comes from a lack of sufficient understanding of concepts such as economy, marketplace, value systems, corporatism, and their histories.

Capitalism is a type of value system that drives exchange via a marketplace. Cooperativism is another value system that drives exchange between people and institutions in market-based systems. When it is suggested that cooperatives are a "kinder, gentler form of capitalism," what is most often being acknowledged is that these two value systems both compel the development of a marketplace for exchange. Often people over-account for that single similarity and conflate the two incredibly distinct and ethically contrary systems simply because they do not understand that a "marketplace" is a general expression of several economic systems, not a fundamentally unique feature of capitalism.

Lamentably, throughout many cooperative texts following the Cold War, the usage of "marketplace" or "competition" became commonplace to eupemistically describe capitalism rather than naming it directly. Given that both of these things can exist in some fashion in a cooperative context, it has created additional confusion among cooperators, as well as added to the defensiveness of cooperativism as part of the inherent and ideal system of capitalism. This glossary and its inclusion of Definitions of basic concepts such as work and enterprise, alongside an exploration of Isms that often get thrown around without precision such as capitalism, colonialism, globalization, and more endeavor to change this pattern within cooperative discourse.

THEORY VS. PRACTICE

As is clearly outlined within the concept of capitalist realism, the values and mechanisms of capitalism are insidious - they have seemingly impacted everything from our languages, societal structures, and how we related to one another and ourselves. Given this challenging reality, it is nearly impossible not to engage with some of the master's tools of capitalism in most things that we do - even when we practice cooperativism.

As a result, cooperatives or individual cooperators may hesitate to name their opposition to capitalism because of a discord between their theory and practice - that is, that it is hypocritical or inaccurate to say you are opposed to capitalism if you are working within it. There is a difference between theory and practice, or how we think we're going to do things and then how we ultimately are able to do them. See the key issue chapter on "Social Transformation" for more information on youth cooperatives explicitly and actively managing this reality.

INCENTIVIZATION

The majority of society's major political and economic institutions (e.g. governments, United Nations, grantmakers) are aligned with and actively promote capitalism and its values - especially nationally, regionally, and globally. As the Cooperative Movement endeavors to coordinate across borders or advocate for its legitimacy and autonomy, it frequently and sometimes necessarily must navigate relationships with institutions and organizations that uphold values and practices in opposition to cooperativism. Most of these relationships are entered into because the cooperators involved genuinely feel these connections can have great benefit to the Cooperative Movement or, less admirably, to specific individuals or a specific cooperative.

Most of these institutions with which cooperators align not only consider capitalism a fine, but ideal, value system. Following, they might choose to refuse new or sever existing relationships with others they feel are in opposition to their beliefs. A fear of losing these relationships or losing credibility within those relationships drives semantic choices (e.g. what words to use to discuss capitalism and other concepts) for some within the Cooperative Movement. Sometimes these relationships promise great benefit, which incentivizes cooperators in those situations to be vague in their communications or weaken their integrity to the *Cooperative Identity*. For how coopyouth have managed integrity challenging relationships, review the key issue section on "Relationships of Coercion."

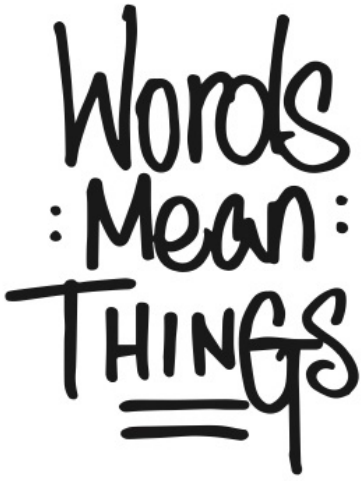
CONCLUSION

The role of capitalism in the work of cooperation has been discussed in varying ways throughout the movement's history. However, it has been consistently identified - directly or euphemistically - as a threat to cooperative integrity, alongside the threat of the nation-state. While much of this section has been dedicated to untangling why capitalism is considered a dirty word within much of the Cooperative Movement, the movement's relationship to naming the nation-state as something other than an ally is also complicated. However, there has already been much discussion on the role of the nation-state, some of which resulting in the creation of the Fourth Principle, "Autonomy & Independence," which explicitly states it is essential to the integrity of a cooperative and the Cooperative Movement to remain autonomous and distinct from government. Additiionally, the threat of the nation-state has evolved over time - from being feared to take on a more controlling role of economic activity (e.g. central planning) to now existing in service to capitalism; making capitalism's threat status somewhat of a representation of the two. For more on this evolution, refer to both the "Isms" section and the *Cooperatives in the Year 2000* report outlined in the literature review.

Throughout this piece, capitalism is named explicitly as inherently distinct from and as a direct threat to cooperation, in proper stewardship of our movement's philosophical discourse. Similarly, the changing relationship of the nation-state and private sector to position the former as servant to

the latter is named explicitly as the growth of neoliberalism. To support this initial step of naming and rejecting these systems, the discussions of key issues facing cooperatives endeavor to extract the influences and frameworks of capitalism (e.g. speaking of “work” instead of “employment,” as outlined previously in this session) - which is a difficult task that has surely been done imperfectly.

Conclusion



The definitions and conceptions in this glossary help to summarize a portion of the contemporary coopyouth interpretation of cooperativism. While some of what is outlined includes criticism of past or current behaviors and actions of cooperators and cooperatives, what is shared is not shared in an attempt to be divisive. Rather, illuminating precisely what cooperativism is and how it needs to be leveraged in the face of systemic oppression, environmental crisis, unfettered warfare, global pandemics, and widespread abject poverty, is - instead - an attempt to bring everyone along into a liberated and cooperative future.

> *“We make no apologies for limitations others might point out. We are on the move. We appreciate those who make us aware of our defects and even our lack of fidelity to the principles that we have embraced. however weak or powerless we may seem to them, we remain faithful to the cause of work and social justice, and we ask them to help us” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 56-57).*

Coopyouth welcome the same level of critique and continuation of cooperative inquiry from other generations, especially the younger. It is only through this consistent striving generation after generation, that we can finetune and strengthen the work we do in cooperation. What is offered herein, in accordance with the first-next step mentality, is not offered as the final word in cooperative philosophy and practice. It is one step along the path of humanity in endeavoring to survive and thrive on this planet.

Key Issues Summary

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Cooperatives throughout the world often experience similar tasks and challenges, no matter the age, language, or culture of their members. The key issues included in this toolkit are largely representative of universal areas of concern for cooperatives across generations. That said, some of these shared issues manifest for youth in distinct ways, which are outlined in the initial discussion of each issue, “General Issue Summary,” that comprises the first section of each key issue chapter. The second section of each chapter, “Coopyouth Realities & Responses,” outlines some of the solutions imagined and enacted by coopyouth from around the world. In addition, "realities" is included to represent that, for some of the issues faced, solutions or effective responses have not yet been identified - so the struggle of and attempts by coopyouth are importantly included, as well. Without exception, all of the responses and realities outlined are from coopyouth individuals and their cooperatives, which are either entirely or majority youth.

The third and final section of each chapter delves into embedded or connected issues that are identified as “Correlated Issues.” The term correlated was used due to its preciseness in identifying how these issues are deeply connected, interact with one another, and can often be functions of one another. Cooperatives are not closed systems, nor do any internal systems within a cooperative operate independently. It is not uncommon for an issue to become apparent to a cooperative in one area (e.g. interpersonal conflict), while the true origin and - following - solution to the issue are to be found within a different aspect of the cooperative’s function (e.g. how information is distributed among the membership). If using this toolkit to address an issue in a cooperative, the ultimate guidance and inspiration for the issue might be found in the chapter discussing a correlated issue.

The key issues outlined can be summarized as follows, with much more introductory detail provided

in each individual section:

STRUCTURE & PARTICIPATION

Often discussed in terms of “governance” and “operations,” the issue of “Structure and Participation” explores the various ways in which cooperators manage both long-term and large-scale conversations alongside day-to-day decision-making. It is perhaps the most common strategy among older cooperatives to draw a strong distinction between these two areas of organizational management, which is then most frequently accomplished by creating an elected Board of Directors responsible for all “governance” activities. Among coopyouth, there is a trend away from the use of Boards and conventional splits between governance and operations, and a move towards reinvigorating the General Assembly and other forms of all member discussion spaces.

Subtopics:

- Legal Requirements
- Once You’ve Seen One Cooperative…
- Board - Y/N?
- General Assembly
- Common Complaints

Correlated Issues:

- Cooperative Culture
- Cooperative Development
- Leadership

MEMBER TRANSITION

Managing the flow of members in and out - or,"Membership Transition" - of a cooperative organization can be very complicated - coordinating training and often capital contribution at the front-end, as well as communication of institutional memory and capital dispensing at the back-end. If mismanaged, membership transitions can be a death knell for a cooperative or can, at least, contribute to the degradation of the cooperative’s integrity. Youth are far more transient than any other age group, and youth cooperatives are faced with managing an especially significant amount of member turnover. This is an issue of primary importance for coopyouth, and - as a result - youth cooperatives have evolved some of the most dynamic strategies for managing entry and exits from mutual enterprises.

Subtopics:

- Entrance
- Exit

Correlated Issues:

- Cooperative Culture
- Education & Training
- Structure & Participation

EDUCATION & TRAINING

“Whatever you cannot understand, you cannot possess” (Johann Wolfgang de Goethe). This takes on a tremendously important meaning in the context of cooperativism. If a member does not fully understand the cooperative’s character, purpose, and functioning, that member does not truly possess or own their cooperative. Additionally, the centrality of education to cooperatives has been urged throughout the movement’s existence, and much cooperative philosophy – specifically, Arizmendiarrieta’s *Pensamientos* – has indicated that all cooperatives must be institutions of education, first and foremost, if they are to be successful. A key aspect of "Education and Training" contributed by coopyouth is the inclusion of unlearning as an integral part of cooperative education.

Subtopics:

- Raison d’etre
- Un/learning
    - Unlearning Capitalism to Imagine Beyond It
- Homo Cooperativus
- Education As Solidarity & Care

Correlated Issues:

- Cooperative Culture
- Structure & Participation
- Social Tranformation

LEADERSHIP

Conventionally held notions of leadership are highly individualistic, often consider material wealth as a measure of success, and foment competitiveness between people. Within a cooperative, leadership can take on a much different shape - it is to be shared, dynamic, and representative of all those involved. In conventional organizations, leadership is often “structured” via formal administrative or titular roles that clearly indicate to people within the social system that someone is “in charge.” Within cooperatives, there are certainly structural mechanisms that support the full expression of cooperative leadership, but the strongest cooperative leadership is maintained by culture, not structure. The subtopics for "Leadership" were drawn directly from the 2015 CoopYouth Statement on Cooperative Leadership, which makes it distinct from all the other key issues included in the toolkit.

Subtopics:

- Representational Vs. Participatory Democracy
- Leadership Succession & Shared Representation
- Autonomous Youth Organizations

Correlated Issues:

- Membership Transition
- Education & Training
- Structure & Participation

RELATIONSHIPS...

The least common denominator and most important aspect of every social movement, community, organization, economic exchange, family structure, and social system is relationship. It is via relationships that we, as individuals and groups, share the knowledge, sustenance, and kinship we need to survive and thrive. These connections and exchanges hold power that gets distributed between those in the relationship according to a variety of factors - to create dynamics of mutual aid or dynamics in which one party exercises a level of control over another. To this end, relationships are discussed in this toolkit in two capacities -

...OF SOLIDARITY

"Relationships of Solidarity" are those with individuals and institutions that help a cooperative to survive and thrive, as well as for the Cooperative Movement to grow and the world to heal. These are the relationships that cooperatives *choose* to have and in which each party has full autonomy; relationships that create mutual benefit for all involved.

Subtopics:

- With Other Marginalized
- Capital
- Ecosystem of Impact
- Cooperative Institutions & Elders
- Other Institutions

Correlated Issues:

- Social Tranformation
- Capital
- Membership Transition

...OF COERCION

Given the reach of capitalism and the nation-state, it is difficult for cooperatives to exist outside of coercive and exploitative economic and political systems. For example, when incorporating legally to avoid legal persecution or in order to access basic government services (e.g. unemployment benefits), a cooperative may be forced to adopt certain organization processes and roles they would not have otherwise installed in order to incorporate. Additionally, some relationships in which power is greatly imbalanced (e.g. a grant maker and grant recipient), there will always be an unavoidable level of coercion - but, it is possible to manage these dynamics to limit harm. "Relationships of Coercion" exist in various intensities throughout our lives, and understanding where and how coercion shapes our relationships is essential to effectively and safely managing those dynamics.

Subtopics:

- Non-Cooperative Institutions
- Cooperative Institutions

Correlated Issues:

- Cooperative Culture
- Capital
- Structure & Participation

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The start-up or expansion of commercial activities is typically understood as “development” in mainstream cooperative discourse. However, for the cooperative philosophers outlined in this toolkit and the coopyouth interviewed, "Cooperative Development" is reflective of the constant striving of individuals within cooperatives to better themselves and self-actualize through community. In this way, cooperation is not an end, but a means to collective liberation, and its development is constant and neverending. “Cooperativism tends toward order which is not static, but is in constant evolution towards a better form” (Arizmendiarrieta, 55). That said, those moments of change that are conventionally conceived of as development (e.g. adding a new product or service, taking on new members) are especially delicate and important in the context of cooperative striving, as navigating those phases of great transformation can either prove to be especially productive or destructive in our pursuit of cooperative liberation.

Subtopics:

- $$$
- People
- Administration

Correlated Issues:

- Capital
- Education & Training
- Relationships of Coercion
- Relationships of Solidarity

CONFLICT & CRISIS

When internal conflict or an external crisis affects a cooperative, its impact depends on a number of factors - including a cooperative’s culture, the nimbleness of its decision-making systems, and whether planning for such instances has occurred. Overall, most of the collected commentary focuses on how to de-personalize or avoid interpersonal conflicts, rather than how to mediate interpersonal conflicts. The reason for this is that it was revealed that most interpersonal conflicts are actually symptoms of systemic inefficiencies or inequities that cannot be solved through mediation. As a result, much of the experiences with crises or conflicts are opportunities for "Cooperative Development," which is a constant process that involves especially key moments when a cooperative can experience maturation or setbaks. Much of “Conflict and Crisis” includes reflections gained through experiences during the COVID pandemic, as well, thereby providing a uniquely thorough view of how youth cooperatives around the world have managed to deal with global catastrophe.

Subtopics:

- Conflict & Emotional Management Skills
- Crisis Response
- Relationships Can Save Us

Correlated Issues:

- Cooperative Culture
- Education & Training
- Capital

CAPITAL

Access to financial "Capital" – money, credit, investment – is important to most known cooperatives; however, it is important to note that a cooperative does not have to trade in financial capital to qualify as a cooperative. For coopyouth, accessing capital is consistently named as one of the biggest challenges facing individual youth and their cooperatives in various CoopYouth Research as well as in interviews for this toolkit. Many conventional financial institutions are unwilling to lend or work with cooperatives in a way that respects the model and philosophy. Coopyouth have evolved a number of creative solutions outside the conventional financial systems, as a result.

Subtopics:

- Eligibility
- External Capital = External Control
- Reparations & Redistribution

Correlated Issues:

- Cooperative Culture
- Relationships of Coercion
- Relationships of Solidarity

COOPERATIVE CULTURE

This is a universal issue for all generations of cooperatives and cooperators."Cooperative Culture" speaks primarily to how well the *Cooperative Identity* is expressed socially in cooperatives - in how interpersonal relationships are nurtured, how each individual is cupported, and how the collective is respected by all those in the group. It addresses organizational practices and structures like those outlined in "Structure and Participation," but also acknowledges that structures and processes to not make or maintain culture on their own. The social and cultural practices reflective of cooperativism and the *Cooperative Identity* are what make the identity of "cooperative" and "cooperator" authentic, not by taking on the name "cooperative," having a particular structure, qualifying for a cooperative statute., etc.

Subtopics:

- Enterprise vs. Business
- Professionalism
- Homo Cooperativus

Correlated Issues:

- Education & Training
- Membership Transition
- Social Tranformation

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The *Cooperative Identity*, as argued by Laidlaw, Arizmendiarrieta, and other cooperative scholars, implies the creation of multi-stakeholder cooperative communities or commonwealths that eclipse capitalism and other harmful systems, thereby leading to broad-scale social transformation. In some instances, this alignment with social transformation is not explicitly named as it "goes without

saying" and is an implicitly understood aspect of the cooperative's work (see "Cooperative Culture"). In others, the cooperative cannot openly advocate for transformative ideologies seeking the end of predominant systems of social, political, and economic control because doing so can endanger their lives or freedoms (e.g. due to repressive governmental regimes). An explicit commitment to the transformation of society is far more common among youth cooperatives than cooperatives of other age groups. Within those youth cooperatives that unambiguously express their alignment with social transformation, being accountable to their cooperative's role in broad-scale societal change is an essential expression of the *Cooperative Identity*.

Subtopics:

- Movement Orientation
- First-Next Step
- Survival

Correlated Topics:

- Cooperative Culture
- Relationships of Solidarity
- Relationships of Coercion

CONCLUSION

This toolkit has applicability across all the generations of the cooperative movement, as elders and youth, alike, can learn from and employ the strategies of coopyouth. Coopyouth have a tremendous amount of wisdom, only a portion of which is included herein - "there are untapped resources in many memberships, especially among women and *young people*. Much of the future success of the cooperative movement will depend upon a willingness to recognize true equality between women and men in the deliberations of cooperative organizations; much of the vitality will come from the involvement of young people" (MacPherson 1998, 238). Coopyouth and their collective wisdom have not had a sufficient voice and platform in the movement to date, though this is changing due to years of work by coopyouth organizers around the world. The commentary from coopyouth on these key issues is testament to that shift.

Case Studies Summary

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SUMMARY

The following sixteen cooperatives were either interviewed or completed longform surveys to generate the content for much of this toolkit. Thank you to all those who participated! Their contributions will benefit countless cooperative youth in their cooperative practice.

- Albanyan CICS (Nigeria)
- Alchemy Collective Cafe (USA)
- Comite Regional de Juventud (Americas)
- Gencisi (Turkey)
- Grren Campus Cooperative (Canada)
- ICA A-P Youth Committee (Asia-Pacific)
- ICA Youth Committee (Global)
- Knowledge Worker (Denmark
- La Ventanilla (Mexico)
- Master Minds Producer Cooperative (Botswana)
- Red Root Artists' Cooperative (Philippines)
- Repaired Nations (USA)
- Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (UK)
- Vio.me (Greece)
- Woodcraft Folk (UK)
- Youth Cooperative Hub (South Africa)

ALBANYAN CICS

Type, Industry: User, Savings

Country, Region: Nigeria, Africa

- Youth Status: All Youth
- Established: Unknown
- Activities: Provider of loans to members, vendor of household items
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Education & Training, Relationships of Solidarity, Cooperative Development, Social Transformation

ALCHEMY COLLECTIVE CAFE

Type, Industry: Worker, Retail & Wholesale

Country, Region: USA, Americas

- Youth Status: All Youth
- Established: 2010
- Activities: Full-service cafe and coffee roaster
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Member Transition, Leadership, Relationships of Solidarity, Cooperative Development, Conflict & Crisis, Capital

COMITE REGIONAL DE JUVENTUD

Type, Industry: Network, Governance

Region: Americas

- Youth Status: Only Youth
- Established: 1997-2007

- Activities: Youth Committee of the Americas region of the International Cooperative Alliance
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Education & Training, Relationships of Solidarity, Cooperative Culture

GENCISI

Type, Industry: Worker, Service

Country, Region: Turkey, Europe

- Youth Status: Mostly Youth
- Established: 2014-2018
- Activities: Project and consultant agency for the social and solidarity economies
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Relationships of Solidarity, Relationships of Coercion, Cooperative Development, Conflict & Crisis, Cooperative Culture, Social Transformation

GREEN CAMPUS COOPERATIVE

Type, Industry: Multi-Stakeholder, Retail & Wholesale

Country, Region: Canada, Americas

- Youth Status: All Ages
- Established: 2011
- Activities: Retailer and wholesaler of fairtrade cotton garments
- Key Issues: Member Transition, Education & Training, Leadership, Relationships of Solidarity, Relationships of Coercion, Capital, Social Transformation

ICA A-P COMMITTEE ON YOUTH COOPERATION (ICYC)

Type, Industry: Network, Governance

Region: Asia-Pacific

- Youth Status: Only Youth
- Established: 2000-2006
- Activities: Youth committee of the Asia-Pacific region of the International Cooperative Alliance
- Key Issues: Member Transition, Leadership, Relationships of Coercion, Cooperative Development

ICA YOUTH COMMITTEE

(fka GLOBAL YOUTH NETWORK)

Type, Industry: Network, Governance

Region: Global

- Youth Status: Only Youth
- Established: 2002-2013
- Activities: Youth committee of the International Cooperative Alliance
- Key Issues: Member Transition, Leadership, Relationships of Solidarity, Cooperative Development, Capital

KNOWLEDGE WORKER

Type, Industry: Worker, Service

Country, Region: Denmark, Europe

- Youth Status: Mostly Youth
- Established: 2011
- Activities: Consultant agency for sustainable enterprise development
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Member Transition, Education & Training, Relationships of Solidarity, Relationships of Coercion, Capital, Cooperative Culture, Social Transformation

LA VENTANILLA

Type, Industry: Worker, Service

Country, Region: Mexico, Americas

- Youth Status: All Ages
- Established: 1996 & 2007
- Activities: Restorer of mangroves in a coastal watershed; guide and educator for tourists and researchers
- Key Issues: Education & Training, Relationships of Solidarity, Relationships of Coercion, Cooperative Development, Cooperative Culture, Social Transformation

MASTER MINDS PRODUCER COOPERATIVE

Type, Industry: Producer, Agriculture

Country, Region: Botswana, Africa

- Youth Status: All Youth
- Established: 2017
- Activities: Vegetable and poultry farmers
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Relationships of Solidarity, Conflict & Crisis, Capital, Cooperative Culture

RED ROOT ARTISTS COOPERATIVE

Type, Industry: Worker, Service

Country, Region: Philippines, Asia-Pacific

- Youth Status: All Youth
- Established: 2008
- Activities: Multimedia artists and designers of print and digital media, as well as interactive spaces (e.g. museums)
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Member Transition, Leadership, Relationships of Solidarity, Relationships of Coercion, Cooperative Development, Conflict & Crisis, Capital, Cooperative Culture, Social Transformation

REPAIRED NATIONS

Type, Industry: Multi-Stakeholder, Service

Country, Region: USA, Americas

- Youth Status: All Ages

- Established: 2018
- Activities: Pan-African support network for cooperative enterprise and community development
- Key Issues: Education & Training, Leadership, Relationships of Solidarity, Cooperative Development, Capital, Social Transformation

SHEFFIELD STUDENT HOUSING COOPERATIVE

Type, Industry: User, Housing

Country, Region: United Kingdom, Europe

- Youth Status: All Youth
- Established: 2015
- Activities: Common equity affordable housing cooperative for affiliates of local university
- Key Issues: Member Transition, Education & Training, Leadership, Conflict & Crisis, Capital, Social Transformation

VIO.ME

Type, Industry: Worker, Manufacturing

Country, Region: Greece, Europe

- Youth Status: All Ages
- Established: 2011-2013
- Activities: Manufacturer of natural and ecologically friendly cleaners and soaps
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Member Transition, Education & Training, Leadership, Relationships of Solidarity, Relationships of Coercion, Conflict & Crisis, Capital, Cooperative Culture, Social Transformation

WOODCRAFT FOLK

Type, Industry: Multi-Stakeholder, Service

Country, Region: United Kingdom, Europe

- Youth Status: All Ages
- Established: 1925
- Activities: Cooperative education and empowerment organization for children and youth
- Key Issues: Education & Training, Leadership, Relationships of Coercion, Conflict & Crisis, Cooperative Culture, Social Transformation

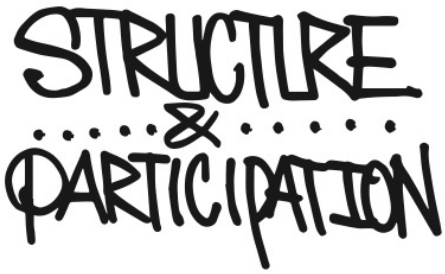
YOUTH COOPERATIVE HUB

Type, Industry: Multi-Stakeholder, Service

Country, Region: South Africa, Africa

- Youth Status: Only Youth
- Established: 2019
- Activities: Education and advocacy organization supporting cooperative enterprise and community development
- Key Issues: Structure & Participation, Relationships of Solidarity, Relationships of Coercion, Cooperative Development, Conflict & Crisis, Capital, Social Transformation

Structure & Participation



> *There is no structure in the cooperative.*
>
> Vio.me (Greece)

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

In order to get an understanding of how youth view “Structure and Participation” in their cooperatives, each person interviewed was asked how they conceive of “operations” and “governance” systems within their cooperatives. Some respondents were familiar with these system names and their distinctions, and others not. A brief description was provided for all interviewees - governance referring largely to organizational decision-making over a longer time period, with operations speaking to day-to-day decisions and activities required to make the cooperative function each day. Do they consider operations and governance to be distinct? Are they systems that are managed at exclusively different times and/or by different people? Or, is there some overlap?

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

For those cooperatives that choose to legally incorporate, most legislative jurisdictions require that the organization have certain roles and structures in place, particularly with regard to governance elements of a cooperative’s function. To this end, a Board of Directors is typically required, as are specific officer positions on the Board (e.g. treasurer, secretary, chair/president). Some cooperatives have found this to suit their needs effectively. However, Boards of Directors are not inherent to cooperativism or the Cooperative Identity, though they have come to be almost assumedly so given their requirement by law in many places and their resulting ubiquitousness. “Legal requirements and corporate structure may also distort the true nature of a cooperative, which is essentially much closer to an association than a cooperative” (AF Laidlaw, 1980, 33).

Some cooperatives, those that perceive such legal requirements as either deleterious to the integrity of their cooperative or simply not a good fit, will author their governing documents (e.g. bylaws), so as to essentially create a work-around for the legal requirements. For example, the Board and any requisite officers will exist on paper, but written into the governing documents is a

description of the process in which the Board and officers automatically cede their decision-making authority to the general membership on an indefinitely renewing annual basis.

Legal requirements often also extend into how capital is handled, tracked, and dispersed within the cooperative - these realities are discussed at greater length in the key issue sections on "Capital" and "Relationships of Coercion."

Finally, certain legal requirements can interact with membership application and selection processes, which can either result in rendering the cooperative's selection methods illegal or require special steps of the cooperative to document and make publicly accessible its record of how and why it did or didn't onboard a particular applicant. As an example, while a housing cooperative might want and need to reject an applicant because they "seem uncooperative," but doing so for this reason without proper documentation or explanation can violate certain housing access laws put in place to combat racial, ethnic, class, gender, ability, and other forms of discrimination in housing.

ONCE YOU'VE SEEN ONE COOPERATIVE...

It is possible to track patterns among cooperatives of similar sizes and ages, but – as with all things with cooperatives – there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution. Additionally, there is no such thing as a "cooperative structure™." However, there is considerable influence from conventional business culture - and even within the cooperative development sector (professionals that help others set up their cooperatives) - that directs new cooperatives to structure themselves in certain ways (e.g. forming the aforementioned Board of Directors) during their initial set-up and start-up.

However, newer cooperatives are often not at a point in their development to easily separate governance and operations or, in other words, day-to-day and long-term decision-making. Even basic operational questions one could categorize as day-to-day may be precedent setting in determining a practice for the long-term - it is important the cooperatievs can remain flexible to seek out their most natural and effective structure. Smaller cooperatives simply do not have enough members or time to have many contrasting positions (e.g. assigning people either distinct governance or operational roles) or dedicated decision-making events (e.g. holding both operational and governance at different times), though they may elect to prioritize decisions and actions in ways guided by those distinctions.

While strong divisions between these activities have been successful for some cooperatives, youth cooperatives are typically both new and small in membership size, so creating and maintaining rigidly structured governance and operations systems before they fully know how their cooperative system naturally operates can be counterproductive. Generally speaking, the Cooperative Identity does not require any particular structure or process. Instead, structure and process should be crafted in response to and in support of the organic function of a group, rather than tasking members with making sense of and conforming to meticulously designed systems that might look better on paper than in practice.

BOARD - Y/N?

As discussed, many cooperatives differentiate between operations and governance and do so most often by relegating all governance activities to a Board of Directors. The Board is typically elected from the membership, sometimes with special non-members appointed (e.g. representative from a neighboring cooperative), or - much less common, but present most in worker cooperatives - the Board is defined as any members present for a meeting at a certain time and place. The concept of a Board of Directors removed from daily organizational function has, as explained in the "Corporatism" section in "Words Mean Things," its origins in violent, commercial colonization. That said, there are certainly instances in which a Board has been of the highest service to a cooperative, though it is often a "default" structure that has presented some significant challenges to the

Cooperative Identity in more tightly aligning many cooperatives with capitalistic modes of functioning.

Start-Up Committees

Predominant cooperative development theory suggests that, before launch, a cooperative should have a “Steering Committee” (or comparable) that then transitions into a Board upon the “launch” or first day of operation of the cooperative. Alongside common legal requirements and their ubiquitousness in conventional corporate culture, the prevalence of Boards in cooperatives is also due in part to the prevalence of this "start-up committee --> Board of Directors" practice among many conventional cooperative developers. If this practice is undertaken and the cooperative decides it would like to adopt a different structure, it is very difficult - but not impossible - to dismantle or replace the Board. It often requires that the then Board either remove itself unanimously or nearly unanimously from power, or the full membership must be sufficiently organized to be able to convene a meeting that achieves quorum and approve a vote. Most people would struggle to think of an example of people freely ceding newly found authority, further complicating such a process. Depending on the size and type of cooperative, convening the quorum needed for an all member decision of that nature is often very challenging. And, generally, it is much harder to undo something entirely and create something new in its place, rather than keep a flexible structure that you can slowly curate according to the possibly changing needs of a cooperative in its early stages of existence. Having a start-up or steering committee during the initiation of a cooperative does not mandate that the cooperative have a Board.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

There are no specific structures or systems inherent to a cooperative enterprise, with the exception of the abstract concept of “membership.” The membership is structurally and procedurally manifest most clearly in the “General Assembly” (or All-Member Meeting, Membership Meeting, etc.) that convenes all members of a cooperative. General Assemblies are often organized to only include governance considerations, though that is not a universal practice (Once You’ve Seen One Cooperative…). No matter the cooperative, its ultimate power lies with the will of its membership, unless that power structure is negated by legal requirements or internal policy or practice out of step with the Cooperative Identity.

Performative Governance

While the General Assembly may be the ultimate seat of power in a cooperative, it is a trend among many cooperatives to have “performative” membership meetings in which long-term strategies and decisions are not made but are, rather, presented to be “rubber stamped” or simply approved by a relatively disengaged membership. Typically, this is a symptom of a cooperative which has ceded most of its power to the Board, which essentially runs the cooperative and very infrequently – once or twice a year – engages the membership via symbolic, performative votes. “Let us give the general assemblies the attention they deserve and the life they need” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 102). While one interpretation of members’ seeming willingness to be hands-off with the governance and control of the cooperative is a strong trust in Board and/or staff, a cooperative without a fully educated, trained, and informed membership is not truly a cooperative in practice. Most such cooperatives began with much higher rates of engagement.

Non-Member Workforce

This devolution of governance is most common for consumer/user cooperatives (e.g. insurance, credit unions, retail food, utilities) that employ professional staff, as well as financially large cooperatives employing professional staff - including many of the aforementioned consumer/user cooperatives in addition to producer cooperatives. This is not an inherently negative phenomenon, though - sadly - it often is, and contentious union campaigns of non-member workers makes this

visible.

Frequently, the level of engagement of the membership in governance tends to reflect how significant the cooperative is to a given member's day-to-day life, despite how impactful the cooperative might be on the member's overall life. For example. a member in a worker cooperative likely engages with the cooperative's governance almost daily, as their participation is required to deliver them the personal fulfillment and financial resources they need to survive. However, a member in an electric utility cooperative likely engages, at most, once a year with the governance of their cooperative, while using the electricity from the cooperative every day, because the cooperative does not require their engagement to function. In this way, the level of governance participation of a member is often proportionate to their engagement in the day-to-day functioning of the cooperative --> in other words, participation in operations is proportionate to governance.

This brings up many questions about -

- the integrity of cooperatives with disproportionate engagement in governance and operations between members and non-members,
- whether a non-member workforce adhers to the Cooperative Identity,
- whether non-member workers would be a reality in the absence of capitalism,
- how effective the distrinction of governance and operations is to a given cooperative, and
- how best to manage different levels of participation and needs among different roles in a cooperative.

These above issues and the role of the non-member worker within different kinds of cooperatives is a point of active discourse in the Cooperative Movement. The most popular contemporary solution is the multi-stakeholder cooperative, in which all those that participate in any way in a cooperative have a membership role with decision-making power in the General Assembly - though those roles and their responsibilities may vary. The multi-stakeholder cooperative model is more common among less wealthy communities (e.g. La Cooperativa Nacional de Servicios Múltiples de los Maestros, COOPNAMA, in the Dominican Republic which includes teacher services, financial services, a resort, furniture stores, etc.), and among those practicing cooperativism under different names (e.g. mutual aid groups).

COMMON COMPLAINTS

Some challenges that arise from ineffectively organized governance and operations system(s) within a cooperative that are often used as reasons to justify or delegitimize a given structure:

Lack of Transparency

Insufficient or distorted information flow can result in a disengaged and disenchanted membership. In many such cases, members would enthusiastically participate in a cooperative's function if they had both the necessary information alongside sufficient education and training to interpret that information. Additionally, when information, education, and training are not properly distributed to all members in a cooperative, it creates a power imbalance, and a conflictual dynamic can arise between those with information and the power to interpret and act upon it versus those who feel alienated because they lack information and/or the power to interpret and make us of it. For example, many people are unfamiliar with how to read financial reports, so when they are distributed without a narrative explanation and/or training around their interpretation, those reports are meaningless to those who cannot understand them. In many cultures, humans respond to such experiences of being unable to understand with shame or humiliation, assuming their inability to understand is a personal failing. As a result, this can cause members to further disengage and isolate from the group. Full transparency and information equity in cooperatives cannot be achieved without the support of adequate education and training. The Fifth Principle, often written as "Education and Training," is actually "Education, Training, and Information" for these reasons. Cooperatives, when fully living out the Cooperative Identity, are entirely transparent

and accessible, no matter their chosen structure or how their various organizational systems are designed.

Poor Community Care

It is an essential part of cooperative practice that a cooperative care for its community of impact, which is expressed primarily in the Seventh Principle of “Care for Community,” as well as in the Sixth “Cooperation Among Cooperatives” and a few Values. There are various ways to facilitate the participation by members of the community within a cooperative’s structure that is reflective of the impact experienced by the community. Firstly, having good information flow within the cooperative ensures that any outside input will be able to be integrated into the cooperative's deliberation processes. Additionally, it can be difficult for an individual community member to know how to approach your cooperative to engage - having a clear and public way for individuals or groups to connect with your cooperative can address this. Cooperatives are not closed systems and have a much broader ecosystem of impact than their membership.

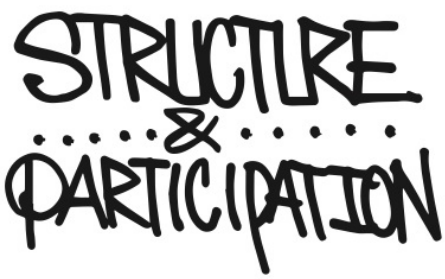
Outside Director Seats

It is somewhat common to appoint or elect outside directors to reserved seats in youth cooperatives with Boards of Directors, often to support the cooperative's sustainability and institutional memory in the face of high membership turnover. Some student cooperatives choose to have non-student representatives from any affiliated educational institutions on the Board, typically a faculty or staff of that institution. Such an arrangement can bring difficulties - if they are older than the other Directors, the young members may defer to their perceived “expertise,” if the Board is representational of a certain subset of members, the non-member essentially has more power in the cooperative than members; and sometimes outside Directors are poor at self-facilitating and being aware of when and how their perspective is important and may overexercise control. On the flipside, sometimes these elder or longer-term outside Directors can provide important institutional memory, allyship, and support in the face of conflict or issues with the broader community, as well as, indeed, certain kinds of expertise.

Slow-Moving

One of the most common critiques of cooperative enterprises is that their decision-making processes are so slow they are ineffectual; unable to properly respond to threats or opportunities. In some cases, this critique is more than fair – particularly when the authority and discretion of those most engaged in the day-to-day functioning of the cooperatives is limited in favor of empowering a distinct governance structure that does not meet regularly, delaying a cooperative's response to an inquiry or issue.

Youth Realities & Responses



COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Albanyan CICS	User	Savings & Credit	Nigeria	Africa
Alchemy Collective Cafe	Worker	Wholesale/Retail (Food & Beverage)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Comité Regional de Juventud (CRJ)	Network	Governance	-	Americas
Genç Işi (aka Youth Deal Cooperative)	Worker	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
Master Minds Producer Cooperative	Producer	Agriculture	Botswana	Africa
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Youth Cooperative Hub	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	South Africa	Africa

STATEMENTS REFERENCED

FULL NAME	YEAR	EVENT	COUNTRY
Statement on Cooperative Leadership	2015	ICA Global Congress & Conference	Turkey

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Coherent Decision-Making

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) shared that, as an incorporated cooperative enterprise, the government mandates that their activities be split into separate “corporate” and “cooperative”

categories that are effectively operations and governance, systems by a different name. This separation disallows the cooperative from doing certain things at certain times or together with other activities. As discussed in the introductory part of this section, this can result in a lack of transparency, when information and power does not flow freely throughout all the systems of an organization. To ensure continuity throughout the organization, as well as to avoid power accumulating or stagnating in one or the other system, they utilize consensus decision-making processes in all aspects of their cooperative. By using the same form of deliberation and decision-making in every area, it makes the cooperative feel less functionally divided while also maintaining a more organic feel to the flow of their communications and work. It is quite typical in some cooperatives to have vastly different deliberation and decision-making methods between governance and operations activities, in which governance decisions are majority-wins votes that tend not to facilitate discussion or adequately engage dissent. Coherent decision-making throughout a cooperative can serev to address these issues, in part.

- Consensus:[1] Several of the cooperatives interviewed utilize consensus in all or some of their organizational decision-making - e.g. Alchemy (Worker, USA), Genç Işi (Worker, Turkey) via a modified form called Sociocracy, Vio.me (Worker, Greece). This decision-making method, ensures that all descisions are sufficiently discussed and all members engaged, which counteracts "rubber-stamp" voting or a subset of members making decisoins for the whole cooperative. It also cotributes to education and training of members, as information is openly discussed, questions can asked, and there are opportunities to ensure all understand the issues - if not, education can take place in the moment as part of the consensus process. Two of the included coopyouth statements call for more participatory deliberation and decision-making practices throughout the cooperative movement. The most direct and comprehensive call is included in the “CoopYouth Statement on Cooperative Leadership” from 2015 -

> *“In order for our movement to be truly democratic, we must utilize participatory processes to openly discuss strategy, vision, and challenges. These processes must seek out consensus and engage large numbers of people, rather than rely heavily on representational models. The key ways in which we can accomplish this are to:*
>
> *1. Employ large group participatory processes*
>
> *2. Utilize online participation tools to engage cooperative movement members in conversation year-round [...]*
>
> *3. Apply consensus-building and seeking models to the decision-making processes of our ICA, regional, and national federation Boards. We propose a move away from our false model of overly representational democracy.”*

1 The linked handbook on consensus is from a UK based cooperative called Seeds for Change, and is an accessible and comprehensive articulation of consensus practice in a variety of contexts. Most simply, consensus is *not* voting and, instead, a way for a group to work together to find a solution that everyone in the group can live with, every time.

ONCE YOU'VE SEEN ONE COOPERATIVE...

There are no required structures or systems that are required for an organization to be an adherent to the Cooperative Identity, with the exception of maintaining a general membership body. It would be futile to prescribe a single or set of systems for all cooperatives. Some youth cooperatives understand this very well, and employed methods by which to determine the best system structure for themselves:

Experimentation

Alchemy (Worker, USA) has persisted through several years of operation, and multiple expansions in their product offerings, services, and retail space. In the course of their evolutions, they've experimented with various organizational system configurations to determine the best fit. Reflecting upon their time when they had formally split governance and operations, they remarked that it "was the most contentious period of the cooperative['s]" life to date. Experimenting to find what works best for a cooperative is the only way to truly see what structures and participation best suit a cooperative's culture and needs. Additionally, given that culture and needs shift over time, experimenting with and reshaping structures or systems - within reason - to fully support the cooperative's needs and culture can support the organization's sustainability.

Structure Flows From Need

When experimenting or designing structures and systems in your cooperative, it is essential to recall that, above all else, cooperatives exist to meet needs. This needs-based focus can be applied to structure and system design, as well. While experiencing financial difficulties, bringing its conventionally understood "operations" to a relative standstill, the Albanyan (User, Nigeria) credit and savings cooperative recognized a need to maintain communications, comradery, and education despite the operational slowdown. As a result, they adopted a weekly meeting practice during which the group undertakes education and deliberation, sometimes providing space for an elder ally to share insights and lead discussion. If and when other activities within the cooperative increase, they can adjust their systems, accordingly, using the social momentum built through continued meetings rather than having to start from scratch. Albanyan drastically adjusted how it functions in a moment of downturn in a way that ensures they can resume more intensive operations in the future, rather than simply shutting down permanently or having to start a new cooperative. A key reminder this example provides is that cooperatives are not purely businesses trading in fiscal capital, they can and do and should meet other human needs. If Albanyan solely viewed themselves as tasked with activities directly related to savings and credit, they would not be meeting the very important fellowship and educational needs of their members still today.

BOARD - Y/N?

Despite the preponderance of Boards of Directors and a great deal of legislation mandating them for incorporated and state regulated cooperatives, several youth cooperatives have explored and employed other systems they feel better meet their needs. Still others have decided that a Board structure does work for them, after they assessed their unique needs and culture - not just because they saw or were told a Board is best.

No!

Genç Işi (Worker, Turkey) has come to employ a governance system, called Sociocracy, that supports

all aspects of their organization's function according to two fundamental principles - "organizational effectiveness, i.e. realizing the organization's aim and purpose effectively and efficiently;" and, "the equivalence/equality between organizational members, honoring everyone's voice."[1] To fulfill these principles, all decision-making is consensus-based, and the organization's structure is constituted of several power-sharing working groups and committees that are delineated according to activity and not along a governance-operations binary. More examples of cooperatives foregoing Board structures are included in the following section "General Assembly."

Yes, and...

The origin of the Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) is rooted in weekly meetings at which a large group of youth workers and producers convened to discuss their shared work challenges across various industries in the area. As the cooperative began to formalize, they slowly added a Board in order to comply with legal mandates, established a quarterly General Assembly schedule (not legally mandated), and the cooperative never ceased their core weekly meeting (not legally mandated) - as it is how the group organically came to function and remains the highest expression of how the people in their cooperative best work with and relate to one another. Even if a cooperative must have a Board or if it seems prudent to do so, it should not be at the expense of other systems and mechanisms that are strong reflections of a cooperative group's culture.

1 https://medium.com/@Harri_Kaloudis/a-brief-introduction-to-sociocracy-a...

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

While General Assemblies are the common denominator of cooperatives, in many sectors and cultures, they have become demonstrations of largely performative governance in which those in attendance simply "rubber-stamp" earlier decisions made by a representative body. The kinds of General Assemblies that have deteriorated in this way are often held only once or twice a year, suggesting a simple immediate response to hold the gatherings more frequently.

"Operationalize Governance"

Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) was familiar with the impotent style of cooperative General Assemblies, as most of the visible cooperatives in Denmark that they had to look to when they began operations were large, wealthy user cooperatives that mimicked capitalist institutions. In order to guard against this kind of degradation and cooptation by capitalist culture, they instituted a system of quarterly strategic roundtables that are mandatory for all members to attend (i.e. an operational General Assembly). These strategy roundtables are what determine and shape the content of the annual General Assembly. It is worth noting that the few members who have been elected into administrative "staff" roles in the cooperatives do not engage in discourse during these roundtables, though they may be asked to present about or report on a specific topic. Interestingly, the annual General Assembly at which only decisions are taken based on the work done in the strategy roundtables, is not mandatory to attend like the roundtables. Given that every aspect of the strategies and plans considered at the General Assembly are developed by the entire membership over several roundtables, this style of "rubber-stamp" governance is not performative, and rather provides one last opportunity for the members to review their work before formalizing or codifying it.

"No Structure"

Vio.me (Worker, Greece) does not have any formal organizational structure nor do they distinguish between operations and governance in their cooperative. Instead, they hold daily General Assemblies of all present members in the morning before work begins within the enterprise. This system facilitates almost infallible transparency within the cooperative, presents opportunities for cross-training education as workers hear about issues and events in other roles, builds relationships

and social cohesion, as well as sets the tone for the day. Given the frequency of these General Assemblies, they tend to run smoothly and not last very long, thereby dispelling the notion that consensus-based or all-member deliberation is necessarily slow-moving and/or ineffectual.

COMMON COMPLAINTS

Transparency

Social Ralationships & Consistent Communication: While Vio.me (Worker, Greece) is able to conduct daily General Assemblies to maintain transparency and communication, as discussed in the previous section, this is not possible for many cooperatives that do not convene daily in a shared physical or digital space. Two such cooperatives evolved relatively similar mechanisms to maintain transparency and build trust in their organizations, as well as to facilitate general social relating and relationship building as this felt it imperative for the health of their group and work. The Comité Regional de Juventud (CRJ) (CRJ, Network, Americas) maintains a WhatsApp group that is a constant flow of formal and informal conversation, which keeps the group actively “in community” with one another. This consistent, low pressue form of communication and connection helps to sustain culture and participation momentum (similar to the weekly meeting practice of Albayan, mentioned earlier). Genç Işi (Worker, Turkey) maintains a Slack channel (a propreitary communication and work coordination app) specifically for “casual conversation” to maintain humanity behind computer screens. This kind of consistent, candid engagement ensures that important aspects of human interaction that builds trust and comradery but cannot be captured in emails or formal governance conversations takes place despite distance or digital separation. When this kind of social transparency is not maintained, it can sow distrust or create a lack of transparency in other aspects of interaction - e.g. a piece of policy is introduced with strong language and without much context, to which members react and draw conclusions about its motivation and intent because they do not have a strong social connection to that member that would, otherwise, prompt them to be curious about the person's intentions, rather than reactive and assumptive. Additionally, if the motivating event or issue has been a part of informal conversation in the cooperative (e.g. "Hey, I've been thinking about how...," such as through a Whatsapp or Slack group, a general understanding can be generated ahead of to avoid reactionary conflict and any potential disagreements or conflict can get teased out ahead of time. For cooperative enterprises that either don’t interact daily or solely interact within structured discussion spaces (e.g. project teams, committee meetings), providing consistent and candid communication channels is an essential support to transparency, as well as providing space for members to freely relate to one another in a way that shapes and sustains their cooperative’s culture.

Everyone, Every Meeting: A beguilingly simple solution to ensuring equitable information sharing and education throughout a cooperative is to have every member come to every meeting, no matter whether or not they maintain a formal role in a given group. This is most applicable to cooperatives of smaller scales, as is true of most youth cooperatives, including Master Mind (Producer, Botswana) which has instituted this practice. The cooperative reports that members more easily learn about how the cooperative functions through this every member-every meeting policy, which, in turn, strengthens their cooperative. More specifically, it is helpful in training members how certain individual roles within the cooperative function and why they are important. As a result, that passive form of education has proven to have a secondary impact as a leadership development tool. The cooperative found that because members are more familiar with the various organizational roles by observing and interacting with them regularly, they are much more likely to step up to take on leadership roles and, further, to be successful in them.

Write It Down!: A refrain that was mentioned by several interviewees across various key issues is - write everything down! This was insisted upon by Genç Işi (Worker, Turkey) in answers to questions specifically exploring “Structure and Participation,” as they find it to be especially essential to their success as a cooperative that both uses a highly decentralized working group structure and one that does not convene in the same place regularly. Given that most every meeting of the cooperative

is held with only a subset of members, but everything that happens in the cooperative is of interest and relevance to all members, information is transmitted both through informal communication means, as well as written down to ensure transmission, maintain accountability, and sustain institutional memory.

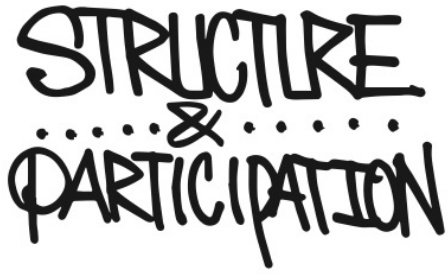
Community Care

Enterprises are not people, and figuring out how to relate to your broader community as an organization can be as challenging as it is necessary. Vio.me (Worker, Greece), from its very start, regularly engaged the broader community in its work and maintains an organizational worldview that incorporates all their neighbors and allies as part of their cooperative community. The cooperative took over an abandoned factory space that they could have been adapted to manufacture or process a number of different products, though Vio.me determined via a community town hall with the surrounding community to manufacture ecologically sustainable cleaning supplies. Further, workers within the cooperative conduct weekly “Solidarity Check-ins” with community members and neighbors in order to ensure everyone is happy within their network of relationships and that everyone’s needs are being adequately met.

Slow-Moving/Ineffectual

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) shared that the perception of cooperatives as ineffectual and unable to respond to threats or opportunities with relative speed is common in their country. They also have experienced this to be a reality, too, for many of the older cooperatives with which they have tried to partner. Red Root found that, specifically, the timeline each of these older cooperatives needed to make a decision on engaging with a potential project with them ultimately prohibited their participation, as application deadlines came before the cooperative's decision could be made. Learning from this, Red Root chooses to organize their workflow and leadership in a project-based fashion, which shapes how they are able to respond to potential projects or issues. When the cooperative is approached or an opportunity arises, all those who are immediately and presently engaged in a related area of work convene to make a decision using consensus, the decision-making method to which they are most accustomed (because they use it in all of the activities of the cooperative) and with which they are, following, very comfortable and quick. Interestingly, they report that their nimbleness and responsiveness has prompted clients and outsiders to say they are like a “regular corporation,” which - while wholly inaccurate - does help to dispel myths that consensus and cooperative decision-making methods are slower or more ineffectual than capitalist enterprises.

Correlated Issues



Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Structure & Participation" in a cooperative are as follows -

COOPERATIVE CULTURE

The container - i.e. the structure and systems - in which a cooperative group functions shapes how people relate to and communicate with one another, i.e. the culture of the cooperative. As outlined in some of the points in this "Structure & Participation" section, if a lack of transparency prevails (i.e. inequitable communication across relationships), distrust will grow and community cohesion will degrade - along with its culture. Relatedly, if the mechanisms of contributing to organizational discourse or participating in decision-making are made impotent (e.g. performative General Assemblies), members can become disempowered and cease participating fully - creating a culture of contagious disengagement that can result in a literal shutdown of a cooperative's structures and systems when quorum (or the quota amount of members required for a cooperative to be able to formally convene a meeting and take decisions) cannot be met for meetings due to insufficient attendance. Culture both informs structures and systems of particiation and cooperation, and is protected and sustained by them - if one element of this equation fails, the other will, as well.

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

During any development process, though especially the start-up, of a cooperative organization, there can be a tendency to over-design a cooperative's systems in endeavoring to account for every potential challenge or opportunity. Sometimes something looks amazing in theory that is impossible to enact in practice, meaning that designing structures and systems in an exercise in both theorizing and trial and error. Additionally, much of the existing cooperative literature and mainstream advice for cooperatives undergoing development is incredibly prescriptive when it comes to structures and systes - e.g. directing cooperatives to install Boards of Directors without assessing their unique needs and culture, strongly delineating governance and operations. It is important that cooperatives develop their structures and systems with constant regard to their idiosyncracies and to the Cooperative Identity as a comprehensive philosophy with almost infinite expression, rather than as a structural checklist.

LEADERSHIP

Most conventional organizations depend on formalized leadership roles to identify and empower leaders. In other words, they bake leadership into the structure of their organization in the forms of titles and job descriptions, rather than consider leadership to be a natural expression of culture and the capacity and passion of individual's at any given time. When leadership is hardwired into a cooperative in the form of titular leadership roles or rigid management structures, it can prohibit the development of organic leadership or discourage the participation of individuals who may have leadership skills they would like to develop but don't wish to or are not ready to hold a formal role.

Membership Transition

> *Every new person changes the culture.*
>
> Alchemy Collective Cafe (USA)

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SUMMARY

In cooperatives, members come and go due to a variety of reasons. Youth are more transient in all aspects of life than other age groups, given that phase of life is known for significant changes such as leaving home, transitioning family structures, taking on new financial responsibilities, pursuing formal education or training, among other things. Accordingly, while membership transition is a universal occurrence, it is a much more common factor of the lifecycles of youth cooperatives and, thereby, it is imperative that the process be well managed in order to maintain the integrity and viability of a cooperative. Poorly managed member transitions can signal the end for cooperatives when the portion of members sufficiently educated and acclimated to living and working cooperatively dips below a critical mass. Among cooperative practitioners in various industries, there are some anecdotal ideas of how many cooperators are sufficient to maintain a strong culture in the face of transitions. For example, the maintenance of at least one-third of the members of a student housing cooperative (a type of youth adjacent cooperative with especially high turnover) is strongly correlated with a successful transition. While there is no single magic number for cooperatives, the higher the number of sufficiently oriented cooperators in a membership, the more likely a cooperative is to survive through to the next lifecycle and a renewed membership.

ENTRANCE

In discussing entrance issues, methods of recruitment play a central role, as do the overall new member acceptance and onboarding processes. For youth, the burden of initial education with new members is often greater than it is for older cooperatives. Most new members are joining a cooperative for the first time and may have little to no knowledge of cooperative philosophy, practice, or the movement. Often, if a young person has familiarity with a cooperative, it can actually be a detriment and added burden to the recruitment and onboarding process. This is because many peoples throught the world harbor negative associations with cooperatives as a result of governments using them as tools of colonization and war. And, the modern day epidemic of nominal cooperatives operating as capitalist businesses has biased many against cooperatives, can serve to attract uncooperative members, and muddy the conceptual and ideological waters of cooperativism for new members. The experience of onboarding and accepting a new member in a youth cooperative can offer especially valuable insights to the movement at large, given that youth cooperatives are often seeking to onboard members who are the hardest to recruit as well as require a great deal of education and/or unlearning.

EXIT

Youth cooperatives experience higher risk departures than older cooperatives as they are typically “first generation” organizations that will eventually have to manage the departure of their founders. Not all youth founders leave their cooperatives, but most do at some juncture. Despite every best intention and well-designed role, founders are often burdened with an emotional connection to the cooperative unmatched by newer members, as well as by the deference of power (both conscious and unconscious) by newer members to them as a founder. This style of deference can mirror the deference young people will sometimes exhibit in relationships with elders and institutions, given that most cultures place a high value on seniority. Given the intensity of the founder-cooperative relationship, sometimes it is imperative that a founder leaves for the cooperative to be truly equitable and successful; other times, the departure of a founder may signal the end of a cooperative. Even non-founder transitions bring similar challenges, as an imbalance in experience

and seniority often exists in youth cooperatives given that many new members have no past cooperative knowledge or experience. This seniority power imbalance can fester in a way that the newer members remain disempowered and don't actively step into leadership roles, making them ill equipped to manage the cooperative once the more senior members depart. The goal is to survive these inevitable transitions of leadership and use them as opportunities of development.

Transition Beyond Elder or Institutional Control

Unique to youth cooperatives is the "departure" of elder control, when elder or institutionally initiated youth cooperatives transition to full youth control and autonomy. There are parallels to this in the intergenerational movement, as paternalistic "build it and they will come" development models persist in certain parts of the world, especially in the realm of international development projects conducted by wealthier nations in poorer nations. Candidly, these elder and institutional transitions can be especially difficult if not well managed, and, as a result, they can become painfully antagonistic, or a paternal dynamic can persist even after the cooperative has become "autonomous."

Pay-Outs

Depending on whether a cooperative participates in the fiscal economy, the equity model of a cooperative, and how much surplus it has accumulated, a cooperative may have to pay out dividends to members when exiting the cooperative. This is a portion of the "equity" (i.e. estimated value of a cooperative less its liabilities) a member is due relative to how much they participated in the cooperative during their tenure. The value calculated as equity includes all kinds of asseture, not just liquid assets (i.e. currency). The necessary equity, as a result, may not be immediately accessible in cash and might not be able to be paid out whenever a member chooses to exit. To account for this, cooperatives typically codify a time period by which they must pay dividends to departed members. In youth cooperatives, payouts are not a regular occurrence for obvious reasons: nascent organizations with minimal surplus for distribution, not (yet or ever) participating in the fiscal economy, or a hyper simple equity model. Additionally, for nascent cooperatives like most youth cooperatives, paying out equity to a first round of departing members can prove to be harmful to a cooperative, as the cooperative then cannot choose to reinvest the accumulated surplus in order to grow or scale the cooperative's operations. In other words, a cooperative can bankrupt itself by paying out too many dividends too soon in its existence. Similarly, sometimes the amount of equity accumulated by a small cooperative or by a member with a very brief membership tenure is so minimal, that the operational cost of calculating and distributing an equity payout is not sufficiently proportionate, i.e. it does not make financial or logistical sense. Some youth cooperatives simply don't offer dividend pay-outs because the membership has not thought to do so, or does not feel it is necessary or appropriate culturally or for some of the reasons already listed.

Institutional Memory

Maintaining a cooperative's institutional memory and culture is, perhaps, the most difficult aspect of member departures. When members leave, they not only take their oral histories with them, they also decrease the capacity of the cooperative to address current decisions and issues with a more contextualized, macro perspective that comes with historical knowledge of organizational patterns and events. Institutional memory is often a proportionate indicator of organizational health; however, the relationship is trickier than it seems, as sometimes certain norms or practices need to be changed, but are held onto as canon because "that's how we have always done it." When this kind of mentality persists, it is often because a founder or senior member is struggling to remain dynamic and responsive to the changing needs of the cooperative, or they may have reached the necessary end of their tenure. Other times, there is a norm or practice that serves a cooperative well, but there is insufficient documentation and it is maintained through oral communication or the labor of a particular member. If the member(s) with that knowledge depart(s), an element of the cooperative's functionality can fall apart due to the lack of documentation or training of continuing members. Managing what gets remembered and how those things get recorded varies by

cooperative, since communication and documentation styles are culturally specific. While there are best practices, there are no one-size-fits-all solutions for sustaining and passing on culture and memory.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Alchemy Collective Cafe	Worker	Wholesale/Retail (Food & Beverage)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Genç Işi (aka Youth Deal Cooperative)	Youth	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe
Green Campus Cooperative	Multi-Stakeholder	Wholesale/Retail (Fairtrade Textiles)	Canada	Americas
ICA A-P Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC)	Network	Governance	-	Asia-Pacific
ICA Youth Committee (formerly Global Youth Network)	Network	Governance	-	Global
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative	User	Housing	United Kingdom	Europe
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe

ENTRANCE

Coopyouth interviewed provided input on new member recruitment priorities, methods to streamline recruitment processes, and - most thoroughly - various practices and guidelines for how best to orient and onboard new members so they are fully empowered, informed, and equipped to participate in all aspects of the cooperative's function.

Recruitment Priorities

Given the risk and potential impact of bringing a new person or persons into a cooperative, it is valuable to target recruitment outreach in some way that serves the priorities of your cooperative, as well as fairly and clearly articulates what your cooperative is about to potential members. Some characteristics to highlight include, if relevant, geography (e.g. neighborhood-specific carsharing cooperative), culture (e.g. cooperative gallery showcasing indigenous artists), or other forms of identity - specifically, youth cooperatives that aim to serve youth should indicate this as part of their outreach. While both the Cooperative Identity and, often, legal statutes prohibit the preclusion of certain peoples (e.g. elders) from membership in your cooperative, you are allowed to recruit and accept people based on their capacity to support the cooperative's purpose. In the example of a cooperative created to serve youth, a young person arguably is more equipped to interpret and meet the needs of other youth than an elder. For Red Root (Worker, Philippines), they noted that - while they are open to older members and have some elder contractors, youth are typically the only applicants that have a command of the tools and style in which the cooperative communicates.

Prioritize Personality, Deprioritize Teachable Skills: More generally, a universal task for all cooperatives is to recruit people with cooperative, rather than uncooperative, dispositions. While some social and cooperative skills can and often need to be taught, a cooperative has to assess its true capacity to transform uncooperative personalities and make membership decisions accordingly. Red Root (Worker, Philippines) explicitly indicated in their interview that it is much easier to educate someone in skills specific to their industry than it is to train someone in how to have a cooperative personality. One step that helps them to ensure those who self-select to apply to Red Root have a cooperative orientation to the world is to very explicitly and often share their unique organizational values (including and beyond the Cooperative Identity) with all potential new members. One of their co-founders joked that after they comprehensively share their values and visions with an applicant, it ensures that only "the crazy ones stay" and continue to pursue membership." Conducting recruitment in a strategic way is an effective way to minimize difficulty in assessing, selecting, and training new members.

Social Movement Participation: One of the required qualifications for hiring in the Vio.me cooperative (Worker, Greece) is for an applicant to have demonstrated engagement with social movement activities in the region. For Vio.me, this provides some evidence that an individual truly "lives their values," rather than just has a command of political rhetoric. Following, they then feel it is relatively safe to assume that someone with a drive for broad-scale social transformation will be both equipped for and committed to enacting transformative values on a more intimate scale in their daily work and relationships within the cooperative.

Recruitment Relationships

The Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada), housed within a university system, maintains a semester-long course on the cooperative model and movement. Students are often directed towards the course by faculty members in hopes of instilling genuine interest in cooperative participation, which then translates into them pursuing cooperative membership with the GCC. Other students may sign up independently for the course with or without knowledge of GCC and may ultimately end up joining the cooperative following their completion of the course. The class is essentially an institutionalized recruitment net for the cooperative, which collects potential new membeea once a year just before the cooperative loses members who graduate, thereby helping to

sustain a critical mass of members in a majority student cooperative with an inherently and incredibly transient membership. Relationships with a variety of other organizations, individuals, or insttitutions can be established to serve in this same fashion - any group or entity that has an overlapping membership base works!

Orientation & Onboarding

Once applicants have been selected to join a cooperative, they must be trained and oriented to how the cooperative functions and their role within it. In many ways, these initial onboarding processes are an extension of the recruitment and selection process, as it is a time at which new members become more intimately acquainted with the cooperative's culture and may decide membership is not for them, or a cooperative may become better aware of an individual's disposition and skillsets, in turn, discovering the new member is not a good fit.

Institutional Connections: The semester course maintained by GCC (MSC, Canada), mentioned above, serves not only as an easily sustainable recruitment method, but also as an unusually extensive orientation training for potential new members. Such thorough training is incredibly unique, in part because it allows members to just learn about cooperative philosophy and practice without having to begin working or participating within the cooperative, and last for months thereby allowing sufficient time for participants to fully integrate cooperativism into their worldview. Most cooperatives do not have the capacity to educate their new members to this degree, as this kind of intensive training requires funding, time, and labor that a cooperative cannot spare. In reality, given that students are funding their own education at the university through money, loans, or awards, they are essentially subsidizing the cooperative's operation by funding their own orientation training. Any student cooperative with a relationship to a specific educational institution may be able to leverage student and institutional resources to their advantage; however, institutional relationships come with as many or more strings attached as benefits. For more discussion on how to manage and what to consider in pursuing such relationships, review the key issue sections "Relationships of Solidarity" and "Relationships of Coercion."

Self Selection: While interest and allegiance should be made explicit by each party, if membership is to always be truly open and voluntary, power and agency need to be sustained by both parties, which can amount to either party saying their interest or allegiance has changed at any point during the onboarding process. The application process for cooperatives is a shared assessment of compatibility, rather than a unilateral judgement. This is in stark contrast to conventional job interviews, where an interviewer has particular power to grant or not grant a job, with the supporting assumption that any applicant wants and would feel "lucky" to get the job. In order to be able to adequately assess compatibility in an equitable way, the cooperative must provide the applicant sufficient information about the cooperative to allow the potential member to "self-select" whether or not they are a good fit and would enjoy membership. Given that predominant employment culture disempowers applicants, it is also imperative that such information is shared alongside the reminder that the cooperative needs the potential member to assess the cooperative and whether or not they truly want to be a member. This practice and ethic was expressed by three worker cooperatives from very different cultures – Red Root (Worker, Philippines), Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark), and Genç Işi (Worker, Turkey). Of those, Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) takes the most explicit approach to empowering potential members to self-select by baking self -reflection and -selection into their onboarding process. As the final step before becoming a full member, potential members are asked to write an essay outlining their vision and plans for their work within the cooperative. After this exercise, the cooperative has found that potential members undoubtedly have a solid idea of whether they think they will be a good fit and enjoy cooperative membership. Applicants without a true commitment to the cooperative experience will struggle with the task and sometimes will not even opt to complete it, thereby choosing for themselves that the cooperative is not for them.

"On The Job'' Onboarding: Many of the cooperatives interviewed report that they invite potential

members to participate in the cooperative as part of their onboarding process by attending meetings or events. This supports effective self-selection, outlined above, if paired with explicit communication that it is important the potential member treat the onboarding process as equitable, rather than as one of unilateral judgement. To actualize the potential member's experience observing the cooperative's function, Red Root (Worker, Philippines), Gencisi (Worker, Turkey), and Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) all ask the potential members to offer input and feedback on what they saw happen in the cooperative. This step both empowers a potential member, by demonstrating that their perspective is valuable no matter their tenure in the cooperative, as well as showcasing whether the potential member fully understands the cooperative's values, culture, and purpose.

Similiarly, Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK), a student housing cooperative with only four members at a time, maintains a very simple and brief training process that they have found fully empowers their members. The house maintains a single document that gets updated annually (end of the school term) by exiting and continuing members. The document is again read and reviewed during an annual education/orientation event at the start of the subsequent school term when new members join. They call the document and meeting at which the document is reviewed the "Handover," and it has successfully perpetuated the cooperative, its culture, and practices for the past several years. Given that the members live together on a daily basis for months and years at a time, one of the most intimate forms of cooperative practice, they are also able to reserve some aspects of onboarding for informal interactions in the course of living together day-to-day.

Peer-Mentorship: Genç Işi (Worker, Turkey) offers mentor relationships during the course of on the job training and observation. In their model, an applicant is paired with a current member with whom they can discuss their experiences or ask questions in a more intimate and private fashion. This can allow a potential applicant to ask questions they might feel insecure about asking in a larger group or sharing something about themselves and their abilities that they don't want to broadcast publicly. The goal is to foster and facilitate frank questioning and increased information sharing. At the end of the onboarding process, both the applicant and the mentor are asked what they think about the applicant becoming a member - which may sound intense, but this is always something they have already discussed one-on-one. This ensures that all decisions are well-considered, thoughtful, and unsurprising for all involved.

EXIT

Cooperatives of majority or entirely youth have to effectively manage members leaving more than cooperatives with older members, accordingly their observations and solutions should be considered especially powerful. The majority of youth cooperatives interviewed for this toolkit had not experienced a great number of member exists, which suggests a need for specific research into the topic with "older" youth cooperatives.

Pay Outs

While youth cooperatives often experience higher turnover than elder cooperatives, they typically have to manage much less complicated departures given that exiting members have not frequently acquired much tenure and, accordingly, equity in a cooperative.

Dividends Not Huge Factor: None of the cooperatives interviewed reported having experience paying out dividends to departing members, given that they either had not made enough money to accrue distributable equity, or they are a nascent cooperative and simply had yet to experience member turnover (i.e. all founders are still members). While only time will tell, many of the interviewed cooperatives do not generate much surplus and may share the fate with many cooperatives throughout the world of being unable to scale to the point that they require complex payout schemes of equity, and may rather just aspire to and sustain a simple living wage or

comparable for their members. However, if a cooperative both chooses to legally incorporate and foresees generating a surplus, they must necessarily incorporate under a statute that subjects them to income taxation. Which begs the question of why a cooperative would choose to pay income taxes and potentially submit themselves to higher levels of regulatory scrutiny if they will never achieve the financial scale at which this is required? Whether or not a cooperative is oriented towards a financial scale that accumulates significant equity or maintains itself as a source of living wage or specific services has a huge impact on the cooperative's culture. Essentially, the former concerns itself to some degree with accumulating individual wealth, while the latter seeks to maintain a part of the commons. Most youth cooperatives tend to fit into the latter category - intentionally or by circumstance.

- Common Equity: If a cooperative is likely never to generate a surplus but would like to legally incorporate, there are other incorporation options that involve lower rates of income taxation, if they tax income at all. Student housing cooperatives, which have inherently transient and often majority youth memberships, but often also possess a great deal of wealth in the form of physical property that could arguably be distributed but typically is not. Over time, the value of their property or properties increases via inflation, as well as generations of members collectively pay off the mortgage over time, and, sometimes, when the housing market in a given area becomes more expensive due to development or increases in population. The Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK) has chosen a model that will never distribute any of the equity accrued through property ownership to members. The reasons for this are many, including: members turnover quite quickly and the calculation and distribution of dividends would be quite burdensome, the increase in equity is not tightly linked with the participation of individual members as a significant portion of its value is determined by external forces, and not paying out dividends maintains a financial cushion that grows over time and can be used to cover organizational costs without having to raise membership dues to cover them. This cushion is called an "indivisible reserve," because it is a financial reserve that cannot be divided up and distributed. By maintaining an indivisible reserve, the cooperative does not depend on extra dues from members to cover big costs (e.g emergency repairs, property renovations) - the value of the property itself is used to sustain the property in perpetuity, and dues are charged at a rate that supports the day-to-day lifestyle of the people living in the property. This cooperative model is called "common equity" and is applicable beyond the housing sector.

Founders

By and large, most of the cooperatives interviewed had not seen the exit of their founders. In fact, many of those interviewed were founders and interested in advice on how to manage their own departure from the cooperative. Only one interviewed cooperative, Alchemy (Worker, USA) a coffee roaster and cafe, reported having an explicit founder departure process in place, which they only evolved after the cooperative experienced the first - and more or less unplanned - departure of some of the founders. Another cooperative, Repaired Nations (MSC, USA), shared they were endeavoring to not facilitate the departure of founders from the cooperative, but rather to shift them away from central leadership roles, a related topic which is covered in greater detail in the key issue section on "Leadership."

Advanced Notice & Intention: The departure of two of three founders from Alchemy (Worker, USA) happened informally, largely because one of the founders chose to remain and was more or less able to provide the same historical perspective and institutional memory the departing founders took with them. When the remaining founder chose to leave the cooperative, they signaled their intention a year ahead of time and engaged the continuing members in a gradual process. He slowly reviewed nearly every aspect of the organization's functions with the entire remaining membership, and methodically handed off specific tasks, bits of acquired knowledge, and relationships. The cooperative conducted an exit interview with the founder that they documented, which is likely to have caught any lingering issues or responsibilities not yet accounted for, allowed for the sharing of

general institutional memory that did not neatly associate with a specific task or function (i.e. oral history), additionally provided an opportunity for the founder to share their wisdom and reflections they'd gained through their experience in the cooperative, and both created a sense of closure and ritualistically marked the an important event in the cooperative's life.

Legacy: In the exit interview conducted by Alchemy (Worker, USA) and outlined above, the departing founder shared an idea they had for a service innovation in the cooperative. Given their experience and perspective, they suggested the initiation of a coffee bean subscription service, which the departing founder and the cooperative began to set-up just before the founder's last day at the cooperative. Shortly after the subscription service was established and the founder left, the COVID pandemic hit the United States and forced Alchemy to cease the operations of their cafe - their main source of income. At the same time, Alchemy's coffee bean subscription service took off as people began ordering coffee to their homes. The cooperative reported that the subscription service is what kept the cooperative solvent and viable throughout the pandemic, allowing them to eventually reopen the doors of their cafe. Giving departing founders an opportunity to distill/share what they've learned and allowing them to dedicate some of their departure time to thinking about the cooperative's future can be a great gift to the remaining members.

Institutional Memory

Perhaps the most important resource that needs to be stewarded during member exits is what is commonly referred to as "institutional memory," which is an abstraction that endeavors to account for knowledge of the organization's past, how it functions at the time of departure, general stories that are representative of the people and relationships within the group, and the group's culture. For cooperative enterprises, a key and unique element of institutional memory is cooperativism - both its theory and its expression.

Relationship with Institutions & Elders: As discussed in more depth within the key issues sections "Relationships of Solidarity" and "Relationships of Coercion," relationships with institutions and elders can bring both myriad challenges and benefits. The Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada) was specifically designed to be in a special relationship to an educational institution, and essentially exists within the institution's superstructure. This connection to an institution that endures much longer than any one member's tenure in the cooperative has allowed the cooperative greater ease in maintaining its institutional memory even in the face of high membership turnover. The institution provides a physical place and system in which information can be recorded and preserved, and its inclusion of individual faculty members in the cooperative helps to both recruit new student members to participate as well as provide a source of accessible historical knowledge and insight. If such an arrangement can be managed without paternalism, it is an ideal cooperative training ground for young people to practice cooperative skills in a "low risk" environment in which their livelihood or savings are not at stake.

Torch-passing Mentality: For many youth cooperatives experiencing membership transition, there can be a rapid succession of leadership styles, organizational priorities, and cultural practices when there is no overlap between leaders or generations of members. If there is no tradition of carrying on the work that was initiated by previous members, the most common consequence is a cooperative that repeatedly starts new initiatives and fails to finish them. The ICYC (Network, Asia-Pacific) had experienced this precise phenomenon for much of its lifetime until relatively recently, when the Chairperson explicitly committed to figuring out what had happened in the past, determining what could be continued, what had been successfully completed, and what initiatives were beyond the Committee's capacity. To support this process into the future, documentation practices, including an online presence and blog, were developed. The Chairperson refers to this as a "torch-passing" leadership practice, which is a concept stemming from ancient relay races in which a torch was passed between runners, and feels that - when made explicit - can help youth cooperatives survive over time and leadership changes.

Lingering Members: Two worker cooperatives, Red Root (Philippines) and Knowledge Worker

(Denmark), both have founding or more senior members who only participate occasionally in their cooperatives, in essence having partially exited the cooperative. For Knowledge Worker, this is manageable because they do not pay salaries; rather, they pay out per project that a member works on, which enables workers to come and go from the cooperative. Red Root also structures their work on a per project basis, allowing some members to work part-time or only when needed. Both cooperatives have found benefit in having longer term members still affiliated with the cooperative and accessible to provide historical information or insight. However, managing the influence of these members on the cooperative can be tricky. Red Root reports having a strong culture that limits the influence lingering members have on the organization, and they maintain their strong culture by having a rigorous entrance process for new members. Within Knowledge Worker, this balance is not as tightly managed as in Red Root. There are times when resentment exists between older and younger members at Knowledge Worker - specifically when older members express strong opinions without working as much in the day to day of the cooperatives as newer members. The solution seems to be better communication about the role/responsibilities of lingering members, as it is difficult to hold individuals accountable to an organizational culture if they do not participate in maintaining that culture daily and/or key elements of the culture are not consistent over time. All this said, these staggered member and founder exits can be a gentle and strategic way to preserve cooperative culture and institutional memory.

Leadership Overlap: For those youth cooperatives with specific age limits for participation (e.g. movement governance entities such as committees and networks), it is very common that a young person will get elected into a titular leadership role (e.g President, Chairperson) during the final years of their tenure within the organization. In such instances, overlap between old and new leadership typically does not take place or extends for a very limited portion of time, as the leader often leaves the organization altogether when they age out at the end of their term. Within the Youth Committee (Network, Global; formerly Global Youth Network), they have coincidentally experienced overlap during the course of two leadership transitions. The Youth Committee Chair both leads the youth network, and serves on the larger ICA Board of Directors as the youth representative. As a result of this latter responsibility, the first leadership overlap occurred because the outgoing Chair transitioned into working for the ICA Board President, which allowed them to be present at Board meetings and support the new Youth Committee Chair by answering any questions, explaining politics, and providing moral support. This was especially important given the network was within its first few years of existence at the time of the transition. During the COVID pandemic, the Chair that previously benefited from leadership overlap is now getting to provide that to the incoming chair due to the meetings at which the Youth Committee Chair is approved by the larger ICA Board being postponed. The coincidental leadership overlaps have proved so beneficial to date, that the outgoing Chair intends to seek to institutionalize leadership overlap as part of their leadership legacy within the network, that they feel will help to ensure strong cultural continuity and help to sustain multi-year initiatives.

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Membership

Transition" in a cooperative are as follows -

COOPERATIVE CULTURE

The entrance of each new member and the exit of each departing member changes the culture of a cooperative because people and how they relate to others, their work, and the world shapes culture. As a result, who is involved at any given time defines whether or not an organiization's culture is cooperative – not structure, not policy, not name. Cooperative Culture is entirely dependent upon people and their relationships. If membership transitions are not well managed, uncooperative people might be lifted into membership, or people may not be sufficiently educated in cooperativism or the organization's purpose. Both can result in the degradation of cooperative culture within the organization, which can be the beginning of the end for a cooperative.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

"A person becomes a person more through education than through birth" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 43). A member's entrance into a cooperative is one of the most essential cooperative education moments for that person, as it informs how they will embody cooperativism and then how they shape the cooperative through their participation. When a member exits a cooperative, it is one of the most essential educational moments for the cooperative, as it can both learn about the impact it has had on a member and can demonstrate the cooperative's health and sustainability when members take institutional memory and expertise with them as they depart. Both the entrance and exit of members in a cooperatice can be key educational opportunities that support the cooperative's function, if they are treated as such.

STRUCTURE & PARTICIPATION

The structures and processes that dictate membership transition, such as how long members can "linger," whether there is overlap between leadership terms, how long and intensive an application process is, and so much more greatly impact how much is lost or gained with each member transition. Additionally, how resilient the systems are in the face of changing members - specifically how accessible or easy to learn the systems and structures of a cooperative are, is a strong indicator of whether or not a cooperative can survive through lifecycles and member turnover. Finally, whether or not a cooperative is able to adapt its structure and systems to the changing needs and goals of its membership as it changes over time is an indicator of whether a cooperative is successful at its primary goal of meeting member needs.

Education & Training

> *It is easier to educate a young person than to reform an adult.*
>
> Father Jose Arizmendiarrieta

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

The quality of coopyouth education foretells the quality of the Cooperative Movement's future. What coopyouth are taught today, they will manifest today and for many days to come. "Education, Training, & Information," the 5th Principle within the Cooperative Identity, is testament to the centrality of education within cooperative theory and practice. In fact, education is considered by many cooperative practitioners, including Father Arizmendiarrieta, to necessarily be the *raison d'etre* for any cooperative: to educate people in working and relating cooperatively in all aspects of their lives. However, the task of cooperative education is made difficult in modern society, as it runs counter to the values and techniques of most educational models throughout the world, which Arizmendiarrieta describes as being "highly antagonistic to communitarian affirmations. While indulging and encouraging individualistic positions, they have profound reservations about proposals for freedom and human solidarity" (1999, 114).

As a companion to this section, reviewing the definition of "Education" in the glossary section "Definitions" can help to orient you to the more radical and comprehensive concept of education leveraged herein.

RAISON D'ÊTRE

Father Arizmendiarrieta was one of the leading thinkers who espoused that cooperatives are, at their most basic, educational institutions that teach people how to be "homo cooperativus." Put another way, he viewed cooperatives as places where people can fully realize and actualize their potential in a way that supports a new conception of the world as a cooperative commonwealth. His suppositions have borne fruit, given that the very structure of Mondragon, the world's largest worker cooperative federation, began and persists as, at its most fundamental, a school. Aside from developing cooperatives around an educational institution as Mondragon has done, there are a variety of simpler ways to integrate education into a cooperative's daily function in ways that both orient it as the cooperative's "reason for being," as well as to sustain the cooperative even when other aspects of the organization's functioning slow or become challenging.

UN/LEARNING

The lead quote used for this section, "It is easier to educate a young person than reform an adult," speaks to two processes that are both necessary elements of contemporary education - learning and unlearning. Both sides of this same coin of education require vulnerability and openness on the part of the un/learner, which are necessarily supported by un/learning environments that feel safe enough that an individual is comfortable expressing that they do not know or understand something, as well as soliciting and receiving input from others to help them un/learn. The culture of a cooperative, alongside its stated priorities, greatly inform whether an organizational environment is sufficiently suited for un/learning. As indicated, the process of unlearning can be understandably more difficult than learning, as it involves complex emotional work in addition to processing forms of external information. The internal work of unlearning asks that a person accept that something they believed to be true is incorrect, that they were knowingly or unknowingly misled by a teacher or caretaker, and - in many cases - that something they held as true or moral is

actually totally false or unethical. How long a person has held a given belief and how much they trusted the person or institution that provided them the initial information are two key factors that impact the level of difficulty of a particular unlearning process. One of the biggest battles within cooperative work, that some may not yet be prepared to undertake, is the unlearning and releasing beliefs and frameworks that are both overly represented in mainstream society and deleterious to the Cooperative Identity. Given the reality that both learning and unlearning must take place, it is the responsibility of cooperatives to create a sufficiently safe environment for those education processes, as well as acknowledge their own limitations in effectively supporting certain processes of learning and unlearning, which strongly inform decisions about new members and organizational learning priorities.

Unlearning Capitalism to Imagine Beyond It

The vast majority of today's world has learned to relate to others and work within capitalism. As a result, society has been collectively educated – to greater and lesser degrees – with information and methods that are shaped according to the values of individualism, the sense the world is an equitable meritocracy, the idea that competitiveness is a virtue, and that material wealth makes a person worthy of respect and care. Unlearning the mores and norms impressed upon us via "capitalist realism" - a concept outlined in greater detail in the "Dirty Words" section, is an especially essential, difficult, and ongoing task in striving to transform our communities into cooperative societies free of coercion and oppression.

HOMO COOPERATIVUS

A frequent and specific task of unlearning related to the process of education, itself, is resetting priorities around what skills are most important to our work within cooperatives. Mainstream society and, at times, the Cooperative Movement, places an abundance of focus on "rational" reasoning and technical skills. While this is changing within many corners of the movement, at many cooperative development training, you are more likely to encounter a session on "Business Planning'' than on "Group Dynamics," though the latter is arguably foundational to whether or not any plans for business operations will be successful. Further, skills like those taught within the context of group dynamics - e.g. emotional regulation, equitable relationship management - are frequently called "soft skills," which beguiles both how truly challenging these things can be and how essential they are to the health of a cooperative. Ultimately, these soft skills are what is required for someone to be a cooperative individual, or "homo cooperativus," and often require the unlearning of maladaptive approaches to emotions and relations. Such un/learning in conventional contexts shaped by individualism and "professionalism" is relegated to an individual's personal life, while cooperativism calls people to consider this work as a collective imperative. The key issue section on "Cooperative Culture" explores the mainstream distinction between the "personal" and "professional" within the context of cooperativism. "Teaching only the proper way for people to behave with one another, without confronting their selfishness, is like plowing the sea" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 40).

EDUCATION AS SOLIDARITY & CARE

While much of the discourse around cooperative education and training focuses on education within cooperatives and the movement, education of the general public is both how the Cooperative Movement grows, as well as an important way in which the Sixth "Cooperation Among Cooperatives" and Seventh "Care for Community" Principles can be actualized. Many of the contemporary movement building and cooperative outreach efforts today tend to adopt an approach more akin to marketing than education - which is a function of "capitalist realism," already mentioned above. Instead, when viewing education as a form of solidarity and care, cooperative practitioners have the opportunity to both teach others with which they are in solidarity how to cooperate, as well as to educate their neighbors and community members in what they are able to do via cooperativism.

Education, a concept and activity absolutely central to cooperative theory and practice within cooperative organizations, is an expression of solidarity and care when enacted beyond the arbitrary parameters of individual cooperative enterprise into a cooperative;s communities, at-large. This speaks, again, to how cooperativism is not just a checklist for an organization, it is a comphrensive philosophy that speaks to individual behavior and all relationships between humans and with the world in which they live.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Albanyan CICS	User	Savings & Credit	Nigeria	Africa
Green Campus Cooperative	Multi-Stakeholder	Wholesale/Retail (Fairtrade Textiles)	Canada	Americas
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
La Ventanilla	Worker	Service (Ecological Preservation & Tourism)	Mexico	Americas
Comité Regional de Juventud (CRJ)	Network	Governance	-	Americas
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Repaired Nations	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	United States of America (USA)	Americas

Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative	User	Housing	United Kingdom	Europe
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Woodcraft Folk	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Education)	United Kingdom	Europe

RAISON D'ETRE

Just as Arizmendiarrieta made education central to Mondragon, the practice of incorporating education into the everyday function of the cooperative was a resoundingly common practice among the coopyouth interviewed. Some of the strategies leveraged among the cooperatives evolved from an intentional and explicit design, while others employ strategies that are more organic and intuitive expressions of the culture of their cooperative.

General Assembly As Education & Communication

Vio.me (Worker, Greece), which runs daily General Assemblies, conceives of that space not just as a place of governance or operational coordination, but also as a place where education and information are readily shared. In practice, this can look like a worker sharing with others about aspects of their tasks with which the others are not familiar, an individual relating an issue impacting the broader community, a group discussion about a potential opportunty, or other forms of passive education and information sharing. In this way, the cooperative does not silo its activities into tidy categories such as governance, operations, training, and more. This can be incredibly efficient, as these activities consistently vary in the amount of time and focus they require. Instead, the cooperative convenes at least one a day to give space for every activity of their cooperative to occur, as needed. These General Assemblies serve to educate members in all aspects of the cooperative's function, informally cross-train workers in other tasks, and cultivate a culture of consistent and accountable communication.

Education As Work

The role descriptions for all workers of Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) include participation in regularly scheduled skillshares between all members. In the course of the skillshares, each member must present or teach about a topic of interest to them, which can but does not have to be related to their current work projects. Additionally, each worker is encouraged to spend one day per work week purely on educating themselves generally and for their work projects. This measure does not go so far as to directly compensate workers for the time they spend self-educating, as workers earn money on a project completion basis; however, it serves the twofold purpose to incorporate education into the cooperative's cultural norms, as well as begin to blur the lines between professional and personal development. This reflects the cooperative concepts of "work" and "education" as defined by Father Arizmendiarrieta, outlined in the definitions section of "Words Mean Things." It is important to note that this process of blurring professional and personal can also be seen within anti-cooperative businesses (e.g. gig economy enterprises - "work from your own car!"); however, the motivations and impacts are quite the opposite as when this happens cooperatively. In profit-motivated businesses, one's work life begins to creep into their personal life, even to the point of exploitation - having to pay for some of their basic working infrastructure (e.g. maintaining personal vehicle for use as an Uber, home office set-up) that has historically been the financial and administrative burden of such things. Within Knowledge Worker, the work and study of

personal development is, instead, invited into and supported by the workplace, without impacting homelife, personal time, or costing the member anything.

Education Sustains

Albanyan (User, Nigeria), a savings and credit cooperative, considers education to be the most fundamental purpose of their cooperative work that persists no matter the circumstances. At the time of their interview for this toolkit, the cooperative did not have sufficient capital with which to operate and, accordingly, largely had no adminstrative tasks or organizational responsibilities. However, they were continuing to gather weekly to learn from one another, as well as from an elder mentor in their community. Some definitions of cooperative enterprise prevalent today that tie cooperativism solely to fiscal exchange preclude Albanyan from being a cooperative since it is not actively "conducting business;" however, within the coopyouth perspective on cooperation, their cooperative is legitimate and they are continuing to cooperate. Those limiting definitions of cooperativism that preclude Albanyan and many other cooperatives do so by subscribing to a "business ontology," an element of "capitalist realism" outlined in both the "Isms" section and "Dirty Words" section of the glossary.

UN/LEARNING

Maintaining an environment in which both the processes of learning and unlearning are supported for individuals and the cooperative, as a collective, has been approached by coopyouth in a variety of ways ranging from collective mentality to codified structures or processes. Within Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK), there is an explicit understanding that all roles are skill building positions and that the cooperative should expect to be constantly educating its members at all times. This educational culture is ensured by a principle that members are to be empowered into certain positions not because they possess the most relevant skills or experience, but almost the opposite - the most qualified person is the one who would most like to learn how to do the work. This is entirely counter to how capitalist enterprises conduct their hiring or work distribution, as well as to how many organizations - conventional and cooperative, alike - conceive of leadership roles determined by election that position existing expertise as qualifications for leadership. SSHC, at the time of interview, was a very small cooperative of four members living together everyday. This is important to note as the size and intimacy level of the cooperative is especially conducive to the safe environment such a leadership model requires to be successful, while larger and/or less intimate cooperatives may require additional and/or more formal measures to achieve the same successfully cooperative and education promoting culture.

Protected Environment

Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada) is a much larger cooperative than SSHC, but also perceives their leadership roles - specifically those held by university students - to be educational experiences aimed at building skills rather than leveraging them. The stated purpose of the cooperative is, first and foremost, education, which they note facilitates a “protected” environment in which people can feel more liberated - e.g. able to make mistakes - in their learning processes, rather than having members fear that their lack of expertise could lead them to endanger a financial bottomline. While the cooperative does have a financial bottomline to maintain, given the purpose of the organization, the fiscal functions of the cooperative are subordinate to the educational ones. This feeling of safety is certainly not possible for all cooperatives, as GCC has a degree of institutional support from their host university they can rely on in the instance of difficulties. Additionally, if the fiscal functions of the cooperative were to cease, the associated university courses on cooperativism would still persist. That said, capitalist culture has subverted the value of people and the self worth of individuals in such an extreme way, that every cooperative has the responsibility to reassert the importance of the individual as tantamount to financial priorities. Doing so not only does this reset values harmful to the survival of humanity, but it is a requisite for learning in a cooperative for a person to consider personal and relational development as more

important than money. While some might dismiss such a sentiment as overly idealistic, it is an ideal towards which cooperativism strives using pragmatic steps.

"On The Job" Training

Similar to the compartmentalization of learning solely to educational institutions above, many conventional forms of education consider learning to be a passive rather than active activity or focus on *observing* rather than *doing.* Observational learning has a time and place, and can be effective in disseminating information, but it is not as empowering as an educational experience that allows a person to enact and practice what they are learning. The Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) essentially runs their organization as a large educational program through which members can get "on the job" training. While this may sound similar to conventional unpaid internships that are highly exploitative, the distinction lies in that the members are working within their own cooperative that they control and from which they benefit. Further, conventional unpaid internships are frequently framed as experiences that can help a young person get a theoretical job on the open market, while the interning experiences provided by YCH for themselves is, instead, a guarantee in advancement in their leadership and role within the cooperative. Those working as interns become sufficiently confident and equipped with the skills needed to take on administrative and governance leadership roles within the cooperative with ease.

Buddy Training

Within Woodcraft Folk (MSC, UK), which works to educate both children and youth in cooperativism, they utilize a buddy system approach to training members on how to fulfill different roles and complete tasks within the organization. Often, an older member works with a younger member to explain to them how things work within the cooperative, which allows for a more intimate experience of education in which a person is likely to feel more comfortable asking questions or trying to do things for the first time. This training system also strengthens the culture or the cooperative by fostering intergenerational relationships within the group that might not otherwise have developed.

Cross-Training

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) has taken a pragmatic step towards subverting their financial bottomline to the development of their members, and has also arguably increased their financial viability over time through the practice of cross-training, a different spin on buddy training. Within conventional enterprises, job titles and descriptions are often relatively static - individuals are hired into single positions with set responsibilities. One such reason for this strategy is the cost theoretically associated with training workers in new areas of work. In such instances, an "expert" paradigm is invoked in which "vertical" advancement (e.g. similar work with more liability, such as a larger budget or number of subordinates) is most often the sole form of accessible professional development and through which you become an expert in a single area of work. This is reinforced in most conventional educational institutions, that typically require individuals to specialize in a field as they advance in their studies, thereby often dedicating a great deal of time and money to a single societal function. A rejection of the expert paradigm does not negate the need for specialization in certain fields or tasks, rather there are opportunities for cross-training at all levels of training and expertise. Red Root has their members train in any position, from facilitating meetings to operating a camera, which they report is one of the biggest draws for new members to join. In the creative, multi-media industry in which Red Root works, they report this is a highly unusual practice and very valuable to their members - training in using special technology or highly specialized skilllsets often otherwise requires costly and time-consuming training at formal institutions. In doing so, Red Root provides its members training for which they would otherwise have to pay. An investment into learning a trade or technology when you're not sure yet if you will truly enjoy or be successful in it is risky for those who are able, and impossible for many without sufficient resources. In a cross-training cooperative enterprise, you can train "laterally" and learn how to fulfill any function in an organization or project. This allows people to discover skills and identify what kind of work they

enjoy most. It keeps work dynamic and engaging, by essentially intersplicing “work” with “study,” which disrupts the notion that someone goes to school in order to work a job for the rest of their lives and reinforces that existence is a fulfilling process of constant development and learning. “Work and study must go hand in hand. We must never disregard the possibilities of those who work, nor underestimate work options for those who stall out in their studies, or grow tired of them. If we want our communities to be seamless, we must provide equality of opportunity continuously throughout life” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 50). Additionally, Red Root is then a much more nimble and adaptive cooperative, in that they have any number of members equipped to fulfill whatever needs arise, rather than having to refuse opportunities or delay projects in order to wait for a properly trained member to have the time to dedicate to a project.

Unlearning Capitalism to Imagine Beyond It

Another aspect of unlearning, called for by coopyouth in two statements (2014, 2015), involves the expulsion of “banking education” from our cooperative spaces. This form of education is called “banking,” because it envisions knowledge as something that is deposited unilaterally by another person with more value than the student - rather than as a shared, equitable process of critical discovery. Coopyouth compel the Cooperative Movement to utilize participatory education styles that reflect, in themselves, the values of cooperation. While there are different participatory education traditions and practices across cultures, Popular Education is a tradition from Brazil that embodies cooperativism.

- Flout Capitalist Logic: The bulk of the unlearning that takes place in cooperatives has to do with the “soft skills” discussed below, however, one of the strategies for bringing people along in the unlearning process within and beyond your cooperative enterprise is living by example. Vio.me, a manufacturer of ecologically friendly cleaning products, does educational outreach in the local community that empowers people to make themselves the very products they are selling, so they do not have to buy them. This flies in the face of conventional, capitalist logic to the point it might seem absurd, even in the eyes of cooperators. However, it is, rather, a full expression of the Cooperative Identity in an enterprise as it makes clear that Vio.me does not exist to be a business and make money, but to serve the community and make the world a better and more cooperative place.

HOMO COOPERATIVUS

Teaching people how to be self-sufficient and able to exist in good relationship is fundamental within cooperative education, and, from the perspective of Repaired Nations (MSC, USA), teaching emotional and relational skills is akin to the raison d’etre for their cooperative as they are endeavoring repair the harms of systemic oppression and trauma that ultimately impacts one’s sense of self and their connection or lack thereof to broader community.

Communication is Key

A base element of self-sufficiency and equitable relationships is the ability to communicate. Specifically, communicating needs and desires in a way that is compassionate, transparent, and not harmful to any involved person. Many interpersonal conflicts arise from communication challenges - misunderstandings due to word choice, assuming understanding when it was not achieved, or even assuming communication is not necessary. Communication challenges such as those become compounded when they take place across cultural or experiential differences, which can functionally amount to people speaking different dialects of the same language that requires some level or translation or mediation. To this end, Gencisi (Worker, Turkey) regularly engages its members in NonViolent Communication training, which effectively helps the group to harmonize their various communication styles by providing them shared standards or tools to aid communication across differences. Given that every cooperative has its own unique culture, creatED by those within it through the process of relating to one another, ensuring that members share a

culture of communication is imperative to support the group's function.

Emotions & Relationships

Managing one's emotions and responses to events and people is a non-linear and lifelong learning process. Learning emotional regulation is often rooted more in experimental trial and error than theory, in other words, it is something that is learned by doing rather than reading in a book. Cooperatives, which seek to facilitate strong relationships capable of conflict resolution and repair, are ideal places in which this kind of personal learning can take place in partnership with others. Further, cooperatives in which individual members effectively manage their emotions well in the face of stress and trauma are much more resilient in the face of organizational change or challenge. However, given that this kind of personal development is often considered "private," there are not many models for how to collectively nurture one another's self growth. Master Minds (Producer, Botswana) takes a very direct approach to addressing individual emotional and relational health in their cooperative by engaging its membership in a training on group dynamics once every three months. The cooperative holds the training on a regular schedule because they recognize how connected it is to the overall health of their cooperative. Additionally, regularly scheduled support responds well to the fact that neither self growth nor conflicts occur in a linear way that ultimately achieves some sort of completion, meaning that the support needs of the cooperative and individual members change from month to month.

Education, Not Mediation

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) takes a similar approach by identifying areas of their cooperative work together that are generating or tend to generate conflict and relational challenges (e.g. decision-making), which they then prioritize for general training of all members. This positions the cooperative to address any existing or potential issues within their group as a shared educational need rather than as an interpersonal conflict that is the responsibility of just those individuals involved. Red Root uses this tactic in order to avoid personalizing issues and thereby potentially provoking stressful emotional responses from individuals. For them, this does not mean ignoring or papering over interpersonal dynamics, instead, they find that they are more effective in moving through conflicts and, over time, become more resilient to challenges when conflict is viewed as a community issue for which education is a form of care.

EDUCATION AS SOLIDARITY & CARE

A particularly poignant reflection on education as solidarity and care came from Woodcraft Folk (MSC, UK), which shared that they view their cooperative programs serving children to be their main contribution to efforts at broad-scale social transformation. More specifically, they believe that, in educating very young people in the values of cooperativism, or - in how to be a homo cooperativus, they are helping to build a world free of coercion and oppression by teaching each young person how to be a cooperative individual and have cooperative relationships for the rest of their lifetime, which extends far beyond their participation in any single cooperative.

Care for the Ecosystem of Impact

Ventanilla (Worker, Mexico) considers educating others about their cooperative and the ecological restoration work to be an inherent responsibility, as well as an expression of both the Fifth "Education, Training, and Information" and Seventh "Care for Community" Principles. They do so by inviting outside researchers and students to visit them in order to work with them and learn firsthand how and why they do what they do - restore and sustain ecosystems that sustain the human, animal, and plant life in their community. By teaching people from around the world how to heal the relationship humans have with and within their natural environments, Ventanilla is essentially teaching people what cooperativism looks like beyond human relationships and social systems. The extension of cooperativism into human relationships with flora and fauna is often

under considered within cooperative practice, to the point that cooperativists in the Americas once called on the International Cooperative Alliance to specifically name and define the cooperative obligation to practice environmental sustainability within the Cooperative Identity.

Movement Building

The CRJ (Network, Americas) began creating outward facing education programs in the form of twenty minute interviews with cooperators they then posted publicly on the internet, as both a means to educate existing coopyouth and young people, in general, as to the work of cooperativists in the region. The intergenerational cooperative movement in the Americas recognized the value in the CRJ's education program, and connected with the CRJ and worked with them to expand the successful interview series. Now the efforts of the CRJ to build and strengthen the Cooperative Movement in the region are likely to be even more successful.

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Education & Training" in a cooperative are as follows -

COOPERATIVE CULTURE

The centrality and importance of education in a cooperative is a strong indicator of the health of the culture in the group. Education is viewed as the reason for a cooperative to exist at all - it's raison d'être, even to the point that it takes precedence over fiscal issues. This kind of prioritization of "people over profit/surplus," which is both pragmatic and idealistic, is a strong rejection of the culture of capitalism and, instead, an insistence on a cooperative culture. Further, given that culture is created and continually shaped by the people within the cooperative and their relationships, education about cooperative methods of communication and emotional regulation are instrumental in safeguarding and strengthening cooperative culture.

STRUCTURE & PARTICIPATION

If education is the raison d'etre of a cooperative, it needs to be built into the organization's regular functioning. Many of the examples included in this section described systems or mechanisms (e.g. general assemblies, job descriptions) that were intentionally structured to be sources of member education, even if they have not traditionally been perceived as being such. One of the most obvious examples of structuring participation in a cooperative to prioritize education is that more than one of those cooperatives interviewed shared that, if the cooperative were to do nothing else, it would still provide education in the form of classes or group discussions.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

People and the world are transformed through education. Often, the sole reason why people continue to subscribe to value systems and institutions that are harmful to them and humanity is due to a lack of education about how those systems truly work and what the real impact of those systems are on their lives. “Their way is blocked not by the lack of power, but the lack of knowledge” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 7). As discussed in the section “Dirty Words,” there are nominal cooperatives and capitalist-cooperators that believe they are living and working cooperatively towards social transformation, but are, instead, contributing to the very system cooperativism seeks to transform. This is often because they are not sufficiently educated about or engaged with cooperative philosophy, nor have they fully assessed the insidiousness of the capitalist perspective in their life and work. Moving from the systemic to the personal, all movements for social transformation and cooperatives, alike, are comprised of people. No matter how well designed or intended a movement or organization may be, broad scale social change requires changes at the level of the individual. Social transformation requires education of people in how to live and relate cooperatively in all aspects of their lives, not just “at work.”

Leadership

> *We discussed the meaning of truly "Cooperative Leadership." To begin our discussion, we first explored the damaging impacts Neoliberalism has had on shaping our notions of success, democracy, and leadership.*
>
> CoopYouth Statement on Cooperative Leadership

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Within cooperatives, leadership must be participatory, transparent, empowered, and shared. Given that shared leadership runs counter to the individualistic notions of leadership predominant in much of society, maintaining cooperative leadership within an organization is a constant task of resisting the creep of uncooperative culture. Multiple interviewees indicated that, if power is not consistently and clearly defined as shared within the cooperative, leadership will eventually degrade into a deferential model, as those holding titular roles (e.g. staff person) compound and consolidate their power at the expense of other members. One lesson that these observations underscores is that building leadership into an organizational structure is ineffective or counterproductive, as building leadership is more a function of culture than structure. The 2015 *CoopYouth Statement on Cooperative Leadership*, drafted at an ICA Conference in Turkey, identified three definitive areas of

cooperative leadership:

- participatory democracy,
- leadership succession and shared representation, and
- autonomy of youth;

so this key issue section is structured accordingly. Much of the leadership observations from the statement primarily address the governance infrastructure of the Cooperative Movement (e.g. federations, associations), though its lessons apply to leadership in all aspects of the movement. The tenets the statement enumerates comprise a minimum standard for maintaining a strong, distributed culture of leadership both within individual cooperatives and movement infrastructure.

REPRESENTATIONAL VS. PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

In the 2015 *CoopYouth Statement on Cooperative Leadership*, participatory democracy was defined as processes or methods that "seek out consensus and engage large numbers of people, rather than rely heavily on representational models." This implies that members are informed of and understand all issues facing a cooperative and have a way to influence decision-making. The demoractic distribution of influence and power within a cooperative is a requisite for cooperative leadership.

Representational governance models in individual cooperatives often look like a subset of a membership meeting regularly (e.g. Board of Directors or comparable) and making decisions for the entire membership. The subset is typically selected via elections, with some positions being filled by the representational body itself (e.g. appointed Directors from outside the cooperative), and/or others being reserved for representatives from within subordinate bodies (e.g. Committee Chairs). Within federations or other forms of movement infrastructure, individual cooperatives may select among themselves who will serve in a representational entity (e.g. federation) on which multiple cooperatives are represented, or individuals may be able to run for election at-large. These movement bodies often have a representational governance structure within them, as well, comprised of committees, task forces, etc.

In representational models, leadership is built into the structure of the cooperative organization, which does not preclude other forms of leadership - but can hamper them from developing, as well as can result in members deferring to titular leadership and becoming disengaged. Participatory democracy is not achieved by any specific structure, though it can be harder to achieve in some structures than in others (e.g. representational models). Some cooperative movement organizations (e.g. federations) are able to maintain participatory democracy in a representational federation when all the individual cooperatives comprising their members have truly participatory democracy - that culture permeates the representational model and keeps it from degrading into deference and disengagement.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION & SHARED REPRESENTATION

For leadership to be authentically shared, it is necessary to take steps to specifically empower peoples conventionally excluded from leadership in society, as well as ensure that positions of power within organizations are rotated to avoid consolidation of power by individuals or factions. Additionally, the practice of sharing leadership among various people with different life experiences and perspectives assists in creating a style of leadership that effectively represents both most people and more kinds of labor. Most conventional leadership models are patriarchal (i.e. consider "feminine" labor and expertise to be less valuable) or white supremacist (e.g. enforces notions of "profesionalism," which you can read more about in "Cooperative Culture"), which doesn't create space for all the kinds of labor and contributions necessary within leadership to be successful. Still further, these conventional leadership frameworks consider the labor of leadership to be "better" or "worth more" than other forms of labor, when all kinds of labor requires skills, time, and learning;

the former framework just works to manufacture unhelpful power imbalances and inequitable distribution of benefits. The steps towards creating successive and shared leadership are required in governance, operations, and all aspects of cooperative functioning.

Governance

In the 2015 statement, coopyouth insisted upon the maintenance of "term limits and gender equity," in governance roles. Throughout the world in cooperatives, far more men hold positions of influence and power, an issue long acknowledged by the International Cooperative Alliance, which skews leadership styles and methods in a narrow way, as mentioned above. Within coopyouth spaces, the significance of "gender equity" is expanded to name the need to include more peoples of other marginalized identities beyond gender, including the poor, people of color, equatorial islanders and others most impacted by climate change, among others. This ensures that, over time, governance leadership remains representative of and accessible to all cooperative members. Strong "term limits" also help to ensure shared leadership over time, but - more uniquely and immediately - serves to dismantle current monopolies on power by certain peoples, such as men, those with more educational credentials, etc. In service to the correcting and redistribution of leadership needed now, the aforementioned 2015 leadership statement also asserts the need to "proactively include youth on [...] Boards through statutory seats." Maintaining a statutory youth seat is a practice has existed for some time in some corners of the movement, but it is not yet a universal practice - most notably within movement governance organizations that provide strategic leadership guiding the Cooperative Movement, at-large, into the future. In 2019, the ICA Board responded to this call for more explicit and codified inclusion of youth in movement governance by formally mandating that all regional Boards maintain a statutory youth seat with full voting powers. To date, this measure has not been fully adopted by all regions, but efforts are continuing to bring about equity in representation of youth globally within the ICA

Operations/Staffing

The *Coopyouth Statement on Cooperative Leadership* from 2015 states the need for the Cooperative Movement and its cooperatives to "maintain shared management structures among leadership and executives to avoid the consolidation of power and foster turnover of leadership in perpetuity." Similar in nature to the above call for governance leadership responsibilities to be redistributed and cycled more frequently cycled, the same principles and practices must be applied to staff, non-member workers, and the operational responsibilities of worker-members within cooperatives. Often, as staff leadership roles typically have no term limits of any kind, they are more likely than governance leaders to squat in a position of power long enough to shape the work and culture according to their individual views, rather than being representative of the membership and staff's collective leadership style and perspective. More specifically to this end, the statement also elaborates the need to "put in place policy that plans for the development of young staff upwards into leadership roles." A common issue in cooperative and non-cooperative organizations alike is the resistance of older workers and staff to transition leadership responsibilities or roles to younger people, and justifying their action based on their relative level of "expertise" compared to their younger colleagues. This is a trap for youth, because, in this paradigm, they have no way to gain the expertise theoretically necessary to advance. A trait commonly attributed to millenials is their transience in work positions, which is sometimes accounted for by the "inability to commit" or comparable by youth, but it is more often a function of the lack of development opportunities. This trap and phenomenon is further caused by conventional notions of leadership, which imply that leadership labor is more "valuable" and should be paid more and leaders should be given more power - such a set-up disincentivizes most people from giving up leadership roles of responsibilities because it can sometimes mean a pay cut. By naming this phenomenon and proactively and intentionally facilitating the growth of youth in organizational work, it can thereby help to reconceptualize leadership labor as just as valuable as other forms of labor.

AUTONOMOUS YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

One of the most controversial aspects of coopyouth leadership within the governance infrastructure of the Cooperative Movement is how the older movement institutions perceive and relate to coopyouth organizations. Often, coopyouth organizations are - logistically - functions of intergenerational governance institutions, in so far as they often meet in coordination with the larger organization, typically have some level of formal relationship with the larger Board (e.g. power to nominate a Director), and sometimes receive a small amount of funding. Many of the logistical host institutions marry their affiliation function with a sense of control over the youth initiatives. When a "host" or affiliated elder cooperative feels entitled to some level of control of a youth cooperative, not only does it dissuade youth from participating in the controlled organization and its activities, it also stifles the evolution and development of cooperative philosophy and practice by encouraging (at best) and requiring (at worst) compliance with the predominant perspectives and behaviors of the older group. As is true for all cooperatives, youth cooperatives need to be respected as fully autonomous and independent - no matter how they are funded or founded; treating them otherwise degrades the Cooperative Identity of all involved.

Membership Eligibility

From the Statement on Cooperative Leadership - "allow for youth organizations to be autonomous at the ICA, regional, and national levels. More specifically, the ICA Board should allow the Youth Committee (formerly Global Youth Network) to decide who and how people can be members of our network." Frequently, host or affiliated institutions will express their control over a coopyouth organization by defining who and how youth can become members. This entitlement to defining membership for youth is reasoned by the relationship of membership with the payment of fiscal dues; an incredibly narrow perspective on economic participation and gravely limited interpretation of the according 3rd principle, which speaks to equitable contribution to and control of cooperative capital, not that every person must pay the same dues - which is incongruent with the needs-based orientation of cooperative philosophy on the whole. The movement stifles itself in a grand sense when it defines membership eligibility for youth organizations only to those youth financially affiliated with dues paying members of a host organization. By doing so, it makes participation in the Cooperative Movement incredibly inaccessible to those youth "not already in" the movement and/or those young people already generally marginalized and disempowered within society. This creates a culture of exclusivity that trends towards a much less representative and equitable movement - which is wholly unappealing to most young people. Youth need to be able to lead and steward their generation of cooperators, as they are the best equipped to do so.

Redistribution of Wealth

A correlated way in which the autonomy of youth organizations is undermined is through conditional funding relationships. These financial relationships, whether explicitly stated as such or not, are often conditional upon the youth organization acting in ways the older organization deems "appropriate" - including with regard to membership eligibility. Further, out of fear of losing access to funding or other resources, youth may stifle their own thinking and practices in order to comply with the views of their supporting organization, whether or not those views are truly cooperative. This teaches youth that compliance - rather than progressive and creative thinking - is how to advance and lead within the Cooperative Movement. As was well established by all the research contained in the review of various coopyouth reports in "What Came Before," as well as via the conducted interviews, the ability to access sufficient capital is perhaps the biggest issue individual youth and youth cooperatives face in their lives and work. In light of this, coopyouth have repeatedly called for the redistribution of wealth within the Cooperative Movement, without the addition of paternalistic conditions tied to that redistribution. One meaningful – and essentially cooperative – expression of leadership is knowing "how to give up what is theirs for the sake of the common good" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 76). Coopyouth identified in statements from 2012, 2014, and 2019 that the common good is best served by redistributing "the cooperative movement's wealth of resources to support marginalized peoples, including youth, to build autonomous networks and innovate the cooperative business model." In practice, this means continuing existing

relationships funding youth projects and organizations without exerting external control or requiring ideological compliance, as well as nurturing new funding relationships without placing restrictions on them in any way. This has a profound impact on a social movement or system because, at root, when wealth is redistributed, power is redistributed.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Alchemy Collective Cafe	Worker	Wholesale/Retail (Food & Beverage)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Green Campus Cooperative	Multi-Stakeholder	Wholesale/Retail (Fairtrade Textiles)	Canada	Americas
ICA Youth Committee (fka Global Youth Network)	Network	Governance	-	Global
ICA A-P Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC)	Network	Governance	-	Asia-Pacific
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Repaired Nations	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative	User	Housing	United Kingdom	Europe
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe

Woodcraft Folk		Service (Education)	United Kingdom	Europe

STATEMENTS REFERENCED

NAME	YEAR	EVENT	LOCATION
International Year of Cooperatives Closing Ceremonies Statement	2012	United Nations International Year of Cooperative Closing Ceremonies	New York City, New York, USA
Cooperate to Transform Society	2014	International Summit on Cooperatives	Quebec City, Quebec, Canada
Youth Statement on Cooperative Leadership	2015	ICA Global Congress & Conference	Antalya, Antalya, Turkey
ICA Global Youth Network Resolution	2019	ICA Global Congress & Conference	Kigali, Kigali, Rwanda

REPRESENTATIVE VS. PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Coopyouth interviewed expressed a variety of ways in which they created a participatory cooperative culture, which extends far beyond the bounds of any conventional notions of "governance." A truly democratic cooperative is representative of all members and enables all members to participate in every function of the enterprise. Democracy was achieved by coopyouth on a cultural level through the institution of specific processes, rejection of overly rigid structures, and sufficient documentation of how leadership does and does not look.

General Assembly as Leader

One of the simplest ways to avoid the potential pitfalls of representative governance structures and centralizing staff structures that consolidate power is to forego them entirely. Vio.me (Worker, Greece) begins each day with an in-person general assembly that includes all members and encompasses all aspects of the cooperative's function. They uphold that "the leader of the cooperative is the Assembly," which effectively represents and engages every member of the cooperative. Alchemy (Worker, USA), similarly, has evolved over time to prefer all-member meetings over any more complicated or distributed form of leadership coordination. They came to prefer all-member meetings after years experimenting with other options that they found to ultimately be incongruent with their cooperative culture and workflows.

Resisting Conventional Leadership

Many of those interviewed reported that, within their cooperatives, if power and leadership roles are not explicitly defined, members will default to operating as though they are working within a conventional organization and/or leadership framework. In practice, this can look any number of ways, for example - members will refuse to initiate a discussion or activity, as they are waiting for and expecting that a Chairperson, staff member, or other person with a more formal title or role to do so for the group. Within the ICYC (Network, Asia-Pacific), this defaulting to conventional

leadership models manifests as a lack of counter-argument or discourse within their meetings, as members choose to defer to titular leadership on decisions. To combat this drift towards deference, the ICYC established a standard of participation for meetings in which each person in attendance is expected to do at least one thing during the course of the meeting - be it take on a task or express an opinion. Repaired Nations (MSC, USA), in the process of “demoting” its founders from central leadership roles but keeping them still working within the organization. In the start-up process, it is incredibly common for individuals able and/or willing to commit more time and labor to the development work to become viewed as leaders, to which other and newer members defer authority. This phenomenon happened within Repaired Nations, which stressed the importance of including in policy and written documentation the style of leadership in the cooperative.

Project-Based Collaboration

Participatory democracy is not just a phenomenon of governance; it is imperative in all other aspects of organizational function in a cooperative. Red Root (Worker, Philippines) leverages a project-based work model that engenders a culture of shared leadership throughout their cooperative. Specifically, work is taken on or initiated as a “project” with a team of those able to and interested in participating. That group convenes to discuss the project, and during that meeting the project’s leader is selected by virtue of whose idea is selected, who has the most energy to commit, or who feels passionate. In other words, they apply the "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," an adage from Karl Marx to how they design and distribute their shared work.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION AND SHARED REPRESENTATION

Ensuring that leadership is exercised by and encompasses the skills and perspectives of all people in the cooperative, and that a cooperative has the capacity to bring in and empower new people with different identities and experiences, are both two of the most important and most difficult tasks of any cooperative. For an enterprise to be fully owned and controlled by its members, they must all be leaders in some capacity or another. This issue, more generally in the Cooperative Movement, most often speaks to gender, race, and class representation. Within the youth cooperatives interviewed, the most common challenges faced in the context of shared and representative leadership have to do with generational succession of leadership - specifically, the recruitment of new members, as well as the transition of leadership from a founding group of members to fully shared and distributed model of leadership.

Empowered by Elders/Institutions

Due to the lack of knowledge about cooperation among the general public, recruitment to a youth cooperative can be difficult. Given that youth – and students, in particular – are so transient, steady recruitment is absolutely necessary to ensure not only that the cooperative persists, but also that there is sufficient participation to have a culture of shared and diverse leadership rather than power becoming concentrated among a few people and, thereby, harder to redistribute to a larger group of people with a culture of shared leadership. Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada) depends on elder faculty at the university in which the cooperative is housed to encourage and nominate students to be members to address this issue, as students often otherwise do not find out about the cooperative until later in their tenure, with only enough time for they themselves to fully learn about the cooperative - not enough time to then be motivated and informed enough to recruit new members before they graduate. Additionally, having an elder faculty member, someone who is typically respected by a student, refer an individual for participation can be incredibly empowering and support the individual in pursuing leadership in the cooperative. Empowerment via interpersonal relationship is effective for people of all ages, though the validation received by a young person from a respected elder can be especially effective. Further still, GCC leverages their institution relationship to fuel recruitment and empower leaders. The cooperative runs an annual

cooperative education course within the university's formal credit granting course catalogue. Through the coursework, students become educated in cooperative philosophy and practice, as well as informed about the specific work done by the GCC. Such a comprehensive educational experience orients students into the cooperative, creating a unique situation in which new members may already feel equipped and enthused to act as leaderships within the cooperative; the culture created by such informed and accessible leadership is essentially cooperative.

Peer Empowerment

While there are many wonderful examples of elders and institutions promoting and empowering young people, there are also many less wonderful examples of the same stifling youth voices, visions, and leadership. The frequent balm to that painful reality is a focus on how youth can empower one another into leadership and active participation. The Youth Committee (Network, Global; formerly Global Youth Network) shared a story of an incredibly capable and enthusiastic coopyouth in Asia-Pacific that repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempted to connect and work with their national and regional intergenerational cooperative associations. Their national and regional movement infrastructure did not support them and simply ignored them; when the young person applied to join the regional youth committee, the regional Board failed to consider their application or even communicate with them about the committee and application. Their leadership aspirations and interest in broader-scale movement activities were totally dashed. However, another young person encouraged them to attend the Global Youth Forum, a global education and relationship building event of the Youth Committee, despite the past disappointment. During this event, their talents and enthusiasm were given space to be expressed within a movement context and were well received by many. They have since become an active and invaluable movement leader regionally and internationally, were interviewed for this toolkit, and their application for the regional youth committee has still yet to be approved by the regional Board and staff. This situation is not unique to the Asia-Pacific, and underscores how absolutely imperative it is that coopyouth organizations be autonomous in all aspects, especially their membership eligibility and engagement practices. Further, it is worth noting that the Youth Committee and its regional youth committees and networks, as well as the events and programs they offer, did not even exist prior to the 2010s; begging the question as to how many youth have been shut out of or unable to access greater participation in the Cooperative Movement.

Peer Training

Due to a series of coincidences during the past two transitions of the role of President within the Youth Committee (Network, Global; formerly Global Youth Network), there has been months of "on the job" overlap between the outgoing and incoming presidents. While this was initially a coincidence, it was found to be so successful in orienting and empowering a new president that the Network is seeking to institutionalize the practice in the future. This kind of peer-to-peer support can provide confidence a new President otherwise might take months or years to develop, which thereby empowers them to more quickly voice their ideas - even if controversial - and take action around their ideas. The Woodcraft Folk (MSC, UK) have a long maintained "buddy system" practice they use to train young people into new positions, much like the term overlap organically evolved by the GYN. What the buddy system provides, moreso other forms of education and empowerment, is emotional validation by a more knowledgeable or experienced peer, which can amount to a form of implicit "permission" for an individual to behave in a leadership capacity. Most mainstream cultures throughout the world promote a deference to authority and, when that authority isn't present to "approve" of someone taking on greater leadership, it can take a long time for an individual to give themselves permission to act in their full capacity in a given position or role. By allowing a "buddy" to provide tacit approval, it can nullify any unconscious or conscious hesitancy to take on leadership.

"Demoting" Founders

Sometimes, when particularly charismatic and capable people found an organization, they will typically accumulate social and administrative power in that process. In order to establish a more

collective balance of power and work within the organization, they will need to intentionally defer power and "demote" themselves. While this issue is common across cooperatives founded by people of all age groups, the majority of youth cooperatives have been recently founded, making this an especially important challenge for coopyouth. Repaired Nations (MSC, USA), a cooperative education and development organization, is currently tackling this challenge. While they are taking steps to name what needs to happen and opening up discussion about how it can be accomplished, there are material realities hindering their efforts. The founders have amassed administrative and social power for multiple reasons, primarily: they were willing and able to work for free or by using funding they acquired that is unique to them as an individual (e.g. fellowships). This amounts to both a considerable amount of consolidated power in the form of institutional knowledge and emotional attachment, as well as means that leadership and power may not necessarily be able to be transitioned unless they are able to access sufficient money to pay someone else or other individuals are able to leverage their labor or personal funds, as the founders did. While Repaired Nations does not yet have a solution, the guiding principle they shared for this work is to approach it explicitly and intentionally. By openly voicing both that the founders need to be "demoted" alongside a clear articulation of what kind of culture of leadership the cooperative seeks to maintain, they have taken the first step of orienting themselves to where they are and where they want to go.

AUTONOMOUS YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The most effective and authentic way to foster cooperative leadership among youth is to allow coopyouth to be wholly self-determinate in their work, in line with the spirit of the cooperative values self-help and self-responsibility. This is in large part because leadership training is rooted in practice; reading or telling someone about leadership does very little to actually empower a person to be a leader. By giving sufficient space and resources to someone so that they can determine and meet their own needs, a person can develop the confidence necessary to be comfortable in cooperative leading others as they had learned to lead themselves. Fostering movement leadership about young people follows a similar path; allow youth to self administer their youth-specific initiatives, and they will gain the expertise necessary to step into broader cooperative leadership roles in intergenerational cooperatives or associations. Coopyouth Movement organizations - such as the ICA Global Youth Network, its four regional affiliates, and the countless national youth organizations, are prime examples of those youth-specific spaces in which autonomy and self-determination is key if they are to be effective in generating truly cooperative leadership. However, quite commonly, these youth organizations are not granted the autonomy that is absolutely essential - and in accordance with the Cooperative Identity - for them to have if they are to truly succeed. Typically, these organizations have some sort of financial or governance relationship with an elder institution that considers that relationship as justification for exercising control over the youth enterprise - primarily by dictating its membership eligibility standards or by conditioning the use of any provided funds. "We cannot speak of community where relationships and coexistence are based on the use of force" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 24). These relationships are also discussed in greater detail, and with a specific focus on the absolutely central issues of membership eligibility and financial control, in both "Relationships of Solidarity" and "Relationships of Coercion."

Protected Environment

Most Coopyouth Movement organizations are relatively "finite" endeavors, insofar as there is typically a small budget, not a huge amount of administrative responsibilities, and most labor going towards executing events and educational programs. In other words, it would be very difficult to generate harm or cause irreparable damage - which is often an implicit concern elders and institutions employ to justify their control of youth endeavors; it is somewhat of a "protected environment" in which young people can practice cooperative skills. While Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada) is not a movement organization, rather an individual cooperative enterprise, the elders and the institution with which the cooperative is relationship uphold this

same tenet and take it a step further - the primary goal of their youth-led cooperative is education, even to the point they are willing to risk their financial viability in the name of education. It certainly helps that the cooperative is highly unlikely to financially fail due to member error or mismanagement, but that reality is always possible, acknowledged, and their priorities to serve members with cooperative education remains primary. Elders and institutions that feel the need to violate the autonomy of youth endeavors out of what is, at worst, a patronizing distrust of youth capacities, and, at best, unwarranted worry can be aided by being reminded of the purpose of coopyouth organizations. After all, a coopyouth organization that does not effectively educate and empower youth but financially sustains itself perpetually creates less benefit than a temporary organization that effectively educates and empowers. In fact, a non-autonomous coopyouth organization may even harm the Cooperative Movement, by discouraging and disempowering youth away from continued participation in cooperation - let alone from taking steps to take on leadership responsibilities.

Wealth Redistribution

Quite logically, in order for an individual or group to feel able to assess and address their own needs and support the same in others, they must have access to the resources necessary to meet their needs. Many youth find themselves able to self-identify what they need and desire, but are unable to take according actions because they are lacking the material resources - not information or insight. “Giving advice is not the same as giving wheat;” no amount of mentorship or wisdom can cure not having enough money (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 87). In practice, respecting the autonomy of a coopyouth enterprise in a way that guarantees its success in generating cooperative leaders is to ensure the organization has sufficient financial resources to do its work. Following, the provision of sufficient financial resources must be done in a way that is not conditioned or corrupted, that does not violate the organization’s or any individual’s autonomy. Candidly, none of the coopyouth interviewed had experienced this, despite it being called for in various coopyouth statements, hence the lack of specific examples.

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Leadership" in a cooperative are as follows -

MEMBERSHIP TRANSITION

How members are recruited into the cooperative – as well as how they are onboarded – quite logically shapes its culture of leadership. Specifically, if a member is given enough educational and informational support to truly understand how the cooperative functions, then are thereby enabled to take on responsibilities to lead those operations. With regard to membership departure, if a member leaves and their contributions are formally acknowledged and intentionally integrated into the cooperative’s collective memory, it establishes a lineage of shared leadership in the cooperative that supports a culture of collective leadership. Given that youth cooperatives have more member turnover than the average intergenerational or elder cooperative, this maintenance of an explicit lineage of leadership helps the enterprise to continue to develop cumulatively, rather than

“restarting” or switching priorities each time there is significant membership transition.

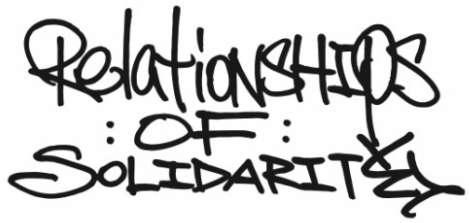
EDUCATION & TRAINING

By and large, according to those coopyouth interviewed, “on the job” experience is the most powerful and successful form of leadership training. This kind of education and training translates into trusting members to take on responsibility knowing they may make mistakes, but is supported by acknowledging that cooperativism is a philosophy that, at base, guides people in being homo cooperativus in cooperative relationships, not building and sustaining the perfect cooperative enterprise. Additionally and unsurprisingly, sufficient orientation into the function of a given cooperative and any specific aspect of cooperative work has great bearing on whether or not a member will feel sufficiently equipped and informed to voice opinions or pursue leadership responsibilities.

STRUCTURE & PARTICIPATION

Conventional organizations design leadership as a product of structure; leadership is “built” into staffing structures and organizational charts via titles and authorities (e.g. hire/fire). Such an approach misses core elements of cooperative, shared leadership, which is necessarily dynamic than “designed” leadership in that it considers who has capacity to lead at a given moment, who is most passionate about a given project or issue, who is ready to develop their leadership skills further, etc. As a result, it is often more fruitful to focus on fostering a culture of leadership in which everyone feels empowered to step up when they are able, rather than meticulously designing processes or creating structures that define leadership without considering the ever-changing needs and capacities of the people who function as cooperative leaders.

Relationships of Solidarity



> *Being in solidarity means accepting our peers, not just as they are, but also as they should be; tolerating their limitations and defects, without giving up the good impulse that leads us to embrace them in the hope that through our service they will improve themselves.*
>
> Father José Arizmendiarrieta

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Relationships with individuals, cooperatives, and institutions were, by far, the most mentioned aspect of cooperative life and work for the youth interviewed. While relationships were explored via explicit questions, they also came up indirectly in the context of sustainability questions (membership transition, financial viability), as well as with regard to an alignment with social justice and transformation. Certain kinds of relationships, those of "solidarity," became delineated in the course of the interviews, in strong contrast to compulsory and coercive relationships (e.g. government regulators, financiers). Additionally, some of the relationships assumed by coopyouth to be borne of solidarity - such as relationships with other cooperative entities, at times turned out to ultimately be solely nominally cooperative and lacking in true cooperation and solidarity. Coopyouth embraced various strategies and approaches to each kind of relationship encountered as their cooperatives engaged with their communities and the broader Cooperative Movement.

WITH OTHER MARGINALIZED

Throughout the world, countless peoples are treated poorly and experience various forms of oppression for their race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, class, and more. Many coopyouth - even those who consider themselves safe from most forms of prosecution - ultimately perceive themselves in shared struggles with injustice, which causes them to pursue relationships to support one another in their collective work against the injustice they all experience.The 7th Principle of "Care for Community'' and the 6th Principle of "Cooperation Among Cooperatives'' compel cooperators of all ages to connect with others who share their values, whether or not they have shared experiences of marginalization, in order to build a cooperative commonwealth. More generally, the connection of all peoples' struggles is a strongly held belief by many. A popular sentiment, "Until we are all free, none of us are free," has been restated by many people throughout history, including Martin Luther King Jr of the United States. Its earliest recording was in the writing of poet Emma Lazarus in the 1800s. Solidarity with all those fighting for justice and facing injustice is a requisite for collective liberation. While this sentiment is sufficient in and of itself to pursue solidarity work, it cannot be ignored that the vast majority of people in the world are oppressed to varying degrees by capitalism and its ilk, and are thereby in shared struggle with one another whether or not they recognize their orientation as such. Further, uth also generally experience marginalization by being denied access to spaces or resources because they are deemed to be "too young" or to not have "enough experience." Those youth with other identities that compound their marginalization, such as via those forms of oppression mentioned above, often encounter even more challenges than their elder counterparts. Youth that experience and acknowledge their experiences of marginalization as shared with others are especially and intimately called to solidarity work with others most societal systems have been designed to exploit and repress.

CAPITAL

Within capitalism, providing financial support to one another can often be the most impactful form of solidarity. The reallocation of money to young people and their frequently nascent cooperatives by wealthier people or cooperatives can sometimes be the only way for a cooperative to launch or achieve scale, especially given the discrimination cooperatives and youth, alike, encounter in conventional financial systems. That said, as discussed in the "Relationships of Coercion" section,

the most challenging relationships coopyouth have with institutions and individuals are typical those in which coopyouth are receiving funding from a more powerful party. Relationships involving the exchange of capital are especially fraught - in most contexts - because of how fraught our notions of money, value, and personal worth have become through the influence of capitalist values in our daily lives. Individualism, one of capitalism's central values, tells us that money is earned independently, and if one has earned more money than another person, they must be better, smarter, and more capable - therefore money makes a person worthy of respect and care while discouraging the sharing of capital. In addition, capitalism professes that every individual must "earn" money in order to deserve to have the things they need to survive and thrive, thus implying that if a person cannot be productive within capitalism, they do not deserve to live. These notions cloud financial relationships, even between cooperatives, when the recipient is seen as inferior to the provider or when the provider views their loan or gift of capital as an expression of their benevolence and/or that the provider still has some claim to the money that entitles them to placing conditions and restrictions on its use. This is in contrast to a provider of capital viewing the act of reallocating funds they have in excess of what they need to be a matter of responsibility to the collective wellbeing of humanity. Any sense of ownership over money given to a cooperative degrades that cooperative, as it ultimately amounts to some degree of outside control that negates the membership's full ownership and control of their cooperative. Solidarity relationships that exchange capital without obligation or expectation affirm the inherent value of people and the subordination of capital to the health and happiness of people.

ECOSYSTEM OF IMPACT

The 6th - Cooperation Among Cooperatives - and 7th - Care for Community - Principles strongly indicate the importance of relationships with people beyond a cooperative's immediate membership. Assessing who and how your cooperative impacts and, following, engaging input from all those impacted can potentially cost or inhibit the cooperative's function in some way, as exploring the realities and needs of all those impacted by an enterprise can reveal externalities (e.g. a factory in a neighborhood has a smokestack that spews smoke from processing plastics, which has been linked to an increase in respiratory illnesses in the surrounding community). However, while assessing and accepting responsibility for externalities is in one way a cost and challenge, it is ultimately a support for the cooperative in achieving its highest possible use within the community. In the example of the plastics factory, the creation of poisonous smoke that makes members of their community members sick exemplifies a violation of the terms of the Cooperative Identity, as it does not fulfill its responsibility to care for the surrounding community. Further, it exemplifies profit-taking without environmental concern, which is representative of humanity's ultimate community, the earth and all its human and non-human inhabitants. Cooperatives are not closed systems, the bounds of enterprise cannot contain costs nor should they hoard benefits. Cooperatives are members of broader communities, movements, and ecosystems; acknowledgement of this in accordance with the Cooperative Identity necessitates the creation and nurturance of many relationships with people and groups external to the organization.

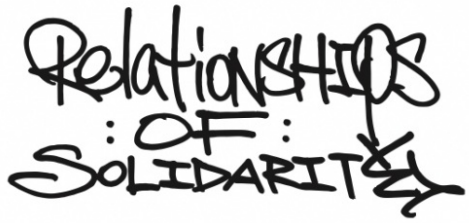
COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS & ELDERS

The most common form of solidarity relationship within the cooperative movement is that between cooperatives and/or cooperators. For coopyouth, such relationships with larger and older cooperatives or more experienced cooperators, specifically, can provide a great deal of support in the form of financial capital, mentorship, and networking to develop additional solidarity relationships. As a result, most cooperatives enter into such relationships with an assumption of good faith in all parties. However, youth sometimes encounter unanticipated issues when those wealthier cooperatives or elder cooperators practice a form of cooperativism corrupted by capitalism. Those instances aside, solidarity relationships with other cooperatives and cooperators are often key factors in the survival and thriving of youth cooperatives.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Relationships of solidarity extend beyond the formal Cooperative Movement, as there are many people who share the cooperative values but do not organize themselves or identify themselves as explicitly cooperative. “Future society will have to be pluralist in all aspects, including economics” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 100). Examples of such cooperative institutions that don’t identify with the Cooperative Movement with which coopyouth maintain solidarity relationships are: educational institutions, charitable enterprises, mutual aid organizations, and individuals leveraging their personal resources for collective liberation.

Youth Realities & Responses



COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Albanyan CICS	User	Savings & Credit	Nigeria	Africa
Alchemy Collective Cafe	Worker	Wholesale/Retail (Food & Beverage)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Gencisi / Youth Deal Cooperative	Worker	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe
Green Campus Cooperative	Multi-Stakeholder	Wholesale/Retail (Fairtrade Textiles)	Canada	Americas
ICA Youth Committee (fka Global Youth Network)	Network	Governance	-	Global
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
La Ventanilla	Worker	Service (Ecological Preservation & Tourism)	Mexico	Americas

Master Minds Producer Cooperative	Producer	Agriculture	Botswana	Africa
Comite Regional de Juventud (CRJ)	Network	Governance	-	Americas
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Repaired Nations	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Youth Cooperative Hub	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	South Africa	Africa

STATEMENTS REFERENCED

NAME	YEAR	EVENT	LOCATION
International Year of Cooperatives Closing Ceremonies Statement	2012	United Nations International Year of Cooperative Closing Ceremonies	New York City, New York, USA
Cooperate to Transform Society	2014	International Summit on Cooperatives	Quebec City, Quebec, Canada
Youth Statement on Cooperative Leadership	2015	ICA Global Congress & Conference	Antalya, Turkey, Europe
ICA Global Youth Network Resolution	2019	ICA Global Congress & Conference	Kigali, Rwanda, Africa

WITH OTHER MARGINALIZED

The 2015 *Youth Statement on Cooperative Leadership* written and presented at the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Global Conference and Congress states, “future panelists at movement events need to be representative of those most impacted by the success or failure of our cooperative work: youth, women, citizens of island nations, people of color, residents of the Global South, the LGBTQ community, un- and under- employed, and other marginalized peoples. Their participation should be funded and prioritized.” This sentiment expressed not only the solidarity

coopyouth feel with other marginalized groups, but also that the participation and engagement of the expertise of marginalized peoples were of the utmost importance to the legitimacy of the Cooperative Movement and its convenings. The identities and experiences of those whose participation should be prioritized, from the coopyouth perspective, is in stark contrast to the three keynote speakers at the event that year - all older white men considered to be economic experts according to their awarded credentials, though all were explicitly lacking in meaningful, firsthand cooperative experience. This kind of speaker selection promotes an expert model that asks people with little to no stake or familiarity in the lived realities of marginalized people what should be done to help marginalized people, that further implies marginalized people are oppressed by some fault of their own that they could address if they had the correct skills. Coopyouth express solidarity with marginalized people in the collective statement that assert people are the experts in their own experiences, marginalized people have a right to self-determination, that the denial of marginalized people's self-determination is the problem, and, accordingly, the Cooperative Movement needs to provide a platform for the voices and work of marginalized people if it is actually going to build a world free of coercion and oppression. It is especially notable that at the same conference at which the 2015 coopyouth statement was created, a direct action was led by coopyouth in attendance to demonstrate opposition to the policies and actions of the host country's recently elected president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, especially with regard for Turley's oppression of the Kurdish people. An intergenerational group of mostly youth held signs with messages such as "cooperation not coercion" and "solidarity with the Kurds." This action was also a critique of the Cooperative Movement and ICA, insofar as they invited Erdoğan to speak at the event, despite the evils he had and continued to commit. The Kurdish people, who have experienced violent repression by the Turkish state for a century, utilize cooperatives in all aspects of their communities - from self-defense to education. Following the action and the conference, the worker cooperative organization within the ICA, CICOPA, issued a statement critiquing the ICA's choice of hosting the event in Turkey during a time of tremendous political conflict and called on the organization to take greater care in selecting conference locations in the future.

Raison d'etre

For Gencisi (Worker, Turkey), solidarity in a common struggle against injustice and marginalization explicitly shapes their reason for existing. To shape their work, the cooperative conducted a great deal of background research and authored strategy papers outlining how they can best serve and cooperate with various different under-served groups (e.g. migrants). Interestingly, and as outlined in "Alignment with Social Transformation," Gencisi very diligently and conservatively assesses the timing and the language of expressing solidarity with communities facing oppression and deprivation in the country.

Youth to Youth Solidarity

Connecting with other youth unfamiliar or disconnected from cooperative philosophy and practice is a form of solidarity across a marginalized group that strategically grows the Cooperative Movement. Master Minds (Producer, Botswana) both participates in a general youth apex organization for their region, as well as nurtures partnerships with other, not explicitly cooperative, youth groups in order to facilitate educational exchanges. Master Minds is the only cooperative group within their network with the apex organization and their educational partnerships. As a result, Master Minds educates and informs many youth about cooperation for the first time. Peer to peer exchange and learning can be a powerfully persuasive way to engage new cooperators, and it tends to be more impactful than hearing about cooperation from someone with whom they don't readily relate (e.g. an elder) or reading about cooperativism in a book. Additionally, Master Minds shared that they impart other, more general skills on other youth that they learned through their cooperative practice – specifically, participatory democracy skills such as facilitation, deliberation, and collective decision-making. Their solidarity relationships with other youth not yet familiar with cooperativism helps to create a more cooperative community and society by fostering cooperative individuals and relationships, even if more explicitly cooperative enterprises do not result.

CAPITAL

Even cooperatives and cooperators are subject to the insidious creep of capitalism's values into how we perceive what we have, what we need, and who we are, which ultimately impacts our relationships – especially those that involve capital. When elder cooperators or wealthier cooperative institutions redistribute money to youth or their cooperatives, this can be game changing – providing them enough capital to launch operations, scale significantly, or exist at all. Capital is much harder for young people to acquire compared to elders, so coopyouth frequently rely on the Cooperative Movement to fund them when conventional financiers reject them both for being young (e.g. lacking in credit or experience) and using an organizational model not universally understood or accepted as legitimate (e.g. many cooperatives – such as Knowledge Worker – found themselves ineligible for pandemic assistance funds because of these biases). Much more on this topic is included in the key issue section on "Capital."

Redistribution of Wealth

The phrase "wealth redistribution" is used in many contexts to describe slightly different things, but its most general meaning refers to the transfer of financial capital or property (e.g. land) to others on a system-wide level via some compulsory mechanism (e.g. taxation by a government, provision of social services). Within the context of social movements, it is conceptualized as a way to lessen class disparities by the process of the wealthy voluntarily giving their excess capital to the poor, motivated by an ethic of community care and solidarity. Some overarching theories around this ethic conceive of it as one step on a path towards a much more equitable future society in which "rich" and "poor" are not discernible identifiers. In this practice of redistribution is necessary for the wealth to be redistributed without conditions; it is better conceived of as "transitioned" than as part of a transaction in which something is expected in return. While those interviewed did not provide many examples of the redistribution of wealth happening within the Cooperative Movement, wealth redistribution was called for by name in two international coopyouth statements - *Cooperate to Transform Society* (2014) and *Youth Statement on Cooperative Leadership* (2015). Wealth redistribution was even called for back in 2012, though in less technical terms, as part of the first documented contemporary coopyouth statement authored at the United Nations during the closing ceremonies for the International Year of Cooperatives. Wealth redistribution grows the Cooperative Movement equitably and sustainably and seeks to counterbalance some of the mechanisms within capitalism that maintain drastic wealth and power disparities, as when wealth is more equitably distributed, so is power.

Reparations

Reparations is a specific form of wealth redistribution that speaks more to addressing past harms and wrongs created by capitalism and its accompanying ideologies (e.g. white supremacy). The initial form of reparations took place between nation-states following wars, when some nation-states were mandated by treaty to pay damages to others (e.g. Germany following World War I). Over time, this concept has been evolved as a transitional and corrective method for other harms, most notably slavery and other forms of racialized violence. Tragically, many slave owners throughout the world actually received "reparations" themselves as part of passed emancipation legislation (i.e. slave owners were compensated relative to how many people they "possessed" and "lost" when enslaved people were freed). Many individuals and groups continue to press for reparations for descendents of enslaved people, especially in the United States and Canada. The "Land Back" movement that focuses on returning land stolen by colonizing forces from indigenous peoples throughout the world is another notable contemporary call for reparations. There are cooperatives throughout the world that both directly and indirectly owe their past and current financial success to the practices and processes of slavery and colonization. These cooperatives and cooperators have a responsibility to repair those harms to the best of their ability; fiscal and property reparations are the most immediate and effective forms of repair. Still further, the statistically knowable reality that certain identity groups (e.g. white, settler, men) possess and can more easily acquire wealth in the current

economic system is an outgrowth of slavery and colonization. Those who enjoy more power and wealth within the current system by virtue of identity can intentionally redistribute the wealth to which they disproportionately have access as a form of reparations, whether or not they have personal ties to racial violence.

Participation & Non-Participation

A complementary transformative approach to redistribution and reparations within capital relationships is prioritizing relationships with cooperative parties and endeavoring to not engage in capital relationships with non-cooperative parties that ultimately perpetuate harmful and inequitable economic systems. For Vio.me (Worker, Greece), strategic participation and non-participation takes the form of exclusively utilizing suppliers, distributors, and other vendors that share their same values of social transformation. In this way, they starve the capitalist economy of their collective wealth, and they strategically strengthen economic and social relationships that can ultimately constitute a cooperative commonwealth in communities beyond capitalism. Green Campus Cooperatives (MSC, Canada) makes similar choices as to with which people or institutions they will enter into any type of relationship. They maintain a special focus on ensuring all those with which they participate in some way fully operate in an ecologically sustainable fashion. More generally, the majority of the coopyouth interviewed indicated their cooperatives maintained some degree of implicit ethical guidelines for participation with others - in selecting projects, clients, and vendors. Such guidelines safeguard the priority within cooperatives to build a fully cooperative society, while endeavoring not to perpetuate capitalism - even at times to the point of increasing expenses. In the words of Father Arizmendiarrieta, “today, the revolution is called ‘participation’” (1999, 81).

ECOSYSTEM OF IMPACT

Many cooperatives are generally “better neighbors” and community members than other forms of organization. For example, in cooperatives in university communities, students often live in large numbers in neighborhoods that also include families and non-students; most of these student households are very transient and, as result, remain largely unknowable and thereby unaccountable to their neighbors. Student cooperative houses, such as the Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK), have a consistent identity and presence that is knowable to its neighbors and therefore helps to facilitate more caring relationships (e.g. respond to complaints about noise, negotiate use of common resources like parking) in their community ecosystem. As discussed in more detail above, assessing all the potential impacts of an enterprise’s operation is not always “good for business,” as it can reveal externalities that the enterprise then has the responsibility to take on rather than simply letting the broader community absorb those costs (e.g. pollutant byproducts from manufacturing and processing). Accordingly, considering a cooperative’s ecosystem of impact is incredibly progressive and truly strives towards a cooperative society. Vio.me (Worker, Greece) shared their admirable practices of engaging their broader ecosystem in their work in an especially intimate and consistent way; first, by asking the surrounding community to decide what the cooperative factory was to produce at the outset of the cooperative’s founding, and secondly, by holding weekly “solidarity meetings” with community members to allow dialogue in order to ensure that everyone in their cooperative ecosystem - well beyond just their membership - was having their needs met without complication.

COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS & ELDERS

Interestingly, the surveyed experiences of coopyouth throughout the world revealed a pattern that the most successful intra-movement solidarity relationships youth have are with individual elders, and many youth experience challenges endeavor to work in solidarity with cooperative institutions (specifically those that function as representational bodies for the Cooperative Movement).\

Elder Mentors

Several of those interviewed reported having an elder mentor who consistently supports their cooperative with education and counsel, and thereby strengthens intergenerational ties within the broader Cooperative Movement). The Albanyan CICS (User, Nigeria) schedules its meetings to accommodate the attendance of a cooperative elder in their community, who gives talks to the cooperative members and assists in mediating interpersonal conflict or addressing when an individual has lost motivation and decreased their level of participation. Similarly, Master Minds (Producer, Botswana) owes a great deal of its success in expanding the cooperative economy in their country beyond the confines of producer cooperatives with exclusively elder memberships to the support of an esteemed elder in their community. Before Master Minds was launched, elder agricultural cooperatives were by and large the only visible form of cooperation. As a result, the cooperative's founders did not initially think they were of use to their work trying to create an enterprise. Their elder mentor explained to them the dynamism of the cooperative model and, as a result, Master Minds is a trailblazer in diversifying Botswana's cooperative movement and showing young people that much more is possible via cooperation than they have likely thought. Similarly, Red Root (Worker, Philippines) reports that a member's elder family member, a former officer in a cooperative, consistently provides them a great deal of expertise and support, particularly when it comes to navigating regulatory and governance issues. Repaired Nations (MSC, USA) enacts a theory of social transformation that places youth at the center of decision-making and organizational strategy, and orients participating elders in a role of providing supportive input and wisdom to the youth leaders in the form of advisor positions.

Cooperative Federations & Associations

A key area in which more effort needs to be expended to build solidarity relationships with coopyouth is among the organizations that comprise the representative infrastructure of the Cooperative Movement. This is made apparent by the fact that most of the coopyouth interviewed reported that their experiences with local, national, or regional cooperative federations and associations were marked by some degree of difficulty, both to initiate or to sustain in an equitable manner. All of those successful stories included in this section involve an individual youth developing or leveraging a personal relationship they have with an elder individual within the movement's governance infrastructure to enact solidarity relationships, rather than the movement infrastructure itself being sufficiently accessible and proactive in expressing solidarity with new cooperators and cooperatives.

Personal Relationship → Formal Role → Respect

Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) consistently reached out to both their national representational federation and large individual cooperatives within Denmark and were ignored; calls were not responded to and emails were left unanswered. Via a personal relationship with an individual with ties to the national federation, one of the cooperative's founders did ultimately gain a position on the federation's Board of Directors, alongside those cooperators who refused to acknowledge their presence or work. Once the representative from Knowledge Worker began attending federation Board meetings, federation representatives and people at larger cooperatives began to finally acknowledge the cooperative and its work. The cooperative was essentially only legitimized in the eyes of the cooperative community by obtaining their role on the Board via personal connections, which does not suggest that the federation functions with fully open or democratic governance. The perspective of the Knowledge Worker representative on the federation Board has been valuable, specifically in providing a unique perspective both as the youngest person in the room by far, as well as from a smaller, worker cooperative in the service sector, which is a key area in which cooperative development among young people is occurring. Most of the cooperatives represented are large consumer-owned enterprises, and are accordingly largely without the expertise or familiarity to support worker or youth cooperatives, likely the kinds to have the most growth in future years. Additionally, Knowledge Worker shared that they feel their participation has

been successful in starting to shift the culture of the federation to be more in line with the values of the Cooperative Identity, as it has operated more as a conventional business association for as long as they have been aware of its work.

Formal Role → Personal Relationship → Funding

The first significant financial contribution to the Youth Committee (Network, Global; formerly Global Youth Network) came about as a result of a personal relationship the Network's Chairperson developed while serving as the appointed youth representative on the global Board of the International Cooperative Alliance. That initial contribution was then leveraged to convince others to contribute additional funds, which - in total - was sufficient for the Youth Committee to execute the Action Plan it had written. Without having access to the global Board and being a respected member of that institutional and intergenerational space, the personal relationship would likely not have been established, the initial funding would likely not have been granted, and the current status of the Youth Committee – including this research project - may not have been possible. "When the necessary economic resources are lacking, the best ideas and the best projects often remain at the idea stage" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 91).

Formal Role → Personal Relationship → Organizational Partnership

The CRJ (Network, Americas) connected with the national Uruguay federation (CUDECOOP) in order to work with youth in that national movement to focus on creating peer-education programs to serve the entire region of Spanish speaking coopyouth. This partnership was enabled by their full, empowered participation in the regional ICA-Americas federation, as the President of the CRJ holds an appointed role on the regional Board and connected with someone within CUDECOOP by virtue of that role. The Cooperative Movement's governance structures and spaces are powerful ways to connect people and cooperatives in solidarity partnership; however, coopyouth have found that they struggle to access those spaces, except via the very few formalized roles that exist for young people in some of the structures.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Some examples of solidarity relationships beyond the scope of the formally identified Cooperative Movement but still cooperative in nature are considered within "Solidarity with Other Marginalized." A more challenging task of building solidarity relationships outside the Cooperative Movement involves institutions that are inherently uncooperative in nature or those that cannot be wholly depended on to consistently share a commitment to the cooperative values in word and deed.

Educational Institutions

Many educational institutions are considered "non-profit" or "not-for-profit," making them much more friendly to solidarity relationships with cooperatives than profit motivated institutions. However, these institutions are often funded by a variety of sources that can compel them to act in ways that are similar to expressly competitive institutions; government funding may require certain structures or practices (similar to those asked of cooperatives seeking to incorporate), donations from individuals or organizations can impact the academic culture (e.g. university may sanction pro-Palestinian faculty when courting contributions from Zionist organizations), the reliance on tuition can cause the institution to prioritize marketing and expenditures that make it more appealling to wealthy students able to pay full price (e.g. sports programs), and still more. While educational institutions may be public (e.g. State funded), private, or a mix thereof (e.g. Charter Schools that may accept government money but do not have to adhere to any governmental standards), they are not unaffected by capitalism.

Solidarity System

Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada) operates within the campus system of York University,

and it maintains a mixed membership of students, faculty, and staff. They have many clients within the university system (e.g. academic departments) which buy the organic cotton garments and goods that they wholesale. The cooperative has transformed their educational institution into a mutually beneficial solidarity system.

Recruitment & Training

Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada) runs an annual semester-long course on cooperative philosophy and practice that functions as the main recruitment mechanism for cooperative members. Students, who are typically transient members of cooperatives, generally struggle to assist in the recruitment of new members because they are often departing the cooperative by the time they have fully learned how best to participate in their cooperative, as well as advocate for it to others. By essentially institutionalizing a recruitment system as a college class, the sustainability of the cooperative's membership base is strengthened. Further, as a long-term educational program, it fully informs and empowers youth more quickly with the knowledge and skills necessary to be an active and effective cooperative member.

Labor & Education Exchange

Ventanilla (Worker, Mexico) has developed relationships with research universities throughout the world that will send funded groups of students and faculty to the cooperative. While staying with the cooperative, the visiting researchers help to run the cooperative and, in exchange, learn about Ventanilla's system of watershed restoration and preservation by propagating mangroves native to the ecosystem. Some visiting researchers are also able to provide insight or information that can help the cooperative to do their work with greater ease or effectiveness.

Alternative to Privatization of Campus Services

At many post-secondary educational institutions, there is a strong trend to privatize various aspects of campus operations. This process mirrors the same that has occurred across governmental institutions in response to the pressures of neoliberalism, which has amounted to the privatization of many services that were at one time or are still considered to be throughout much of the world to be the purview of the government to provide; healthcare is an industry in which significant disparities in services exist in countries that have privatized versus those with public health systems. In practice on educational institution campuses, this oftens involves universities selling their campus bookstores or hospitality/student centers to large corporations in the retail book and hospitality industries, respectively. Additionally, student housing has become increasingly privatized, forcing students to find a place to live in the housing market near the institution's campus. By cooperativizing these campus services and amenities, it showcases a viable alternative to broad-scale privatization that can degrade the culture and identity of an educational institution, no longer fostering a sense of "school pride" that can be a significant factor for students in selecting a post-secondary school. Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK), like many other student housing cooperatives, provides the most affordable housing for students in the local marketplace. In the past, some post-secondary institutions have provided support in some form or another to local independent cooperatives because they view them as providing a considerable service. If the development of student cooperatives were supported by educational institutions in a way that ensured the autonomy and independence of those cooperatives, the reach and influence of the Cooperative Movement could grow exponentially.

NGOs & Governmental Relationships

Working with government institutions or their counterparts, Non Governmental Organizations - which exist to provide services similar to those of governments but those that the governments fail to provide, can be very challenging for cooperatives. Both governments and NGOs conceive of themselves as constituting a world government and civil sector that is tasked with organizing and serving society on the global level from the top-down. This sector does include some cooperative

organizations, including the International Cooperative Alliance. However, no matter the intended benevolence or humanitarian aims of those involved in these structures, if they embody the described orientation towards the world and the people in it, it creates a fraught power dynamic between the governors/service-providers and the governed/served. That said, there is potential for solidarity that some coopyouth have managed to achieve mutually beneficial relationships with various governmental and NGO actors.

Personal Relationship

Over time, Master Minds (Producer, Botswana) has developed personal relationships with several specific staff members within the municipal government. They report that those relationships support their sustainability, as they have – through these relationships – educated and acclimated elder government workers in how to nurture respectful relationships with both youth and cooperatives. Master Minds feels that those individual staff people would be willing and able to help other youth create new, autonomous cooperatives using what they've learned through their relationship with Master Minds or support additional youth cooperatives that form independently. The confidence the cooperative has in their partnerships rests in trustworthy personal dynamics with specific people, not in the institution itself, which mirrors situations coopyouth face in navigating relationships with Cooperative Movement institutions.

Leverage External Relationships for Intra-Movement Respect

After consistently struggling to be acknowledged and respected by their regional Cooperative Movement federation, the ICYC (Network, Asia-Pacific) sought out a collaboration with the International Labor Organization (ILO), an agency of the United Nations that sets international labor standards. The ILO was receptive to the ICYC, and when news of this partnership reached the regional Asia-Pacific Board and staff, it legitimized the network in their eyes and resulted in a brief period of acknowledgment and productive exchange between the two parties.

Share Cooperation with Value-Aligned

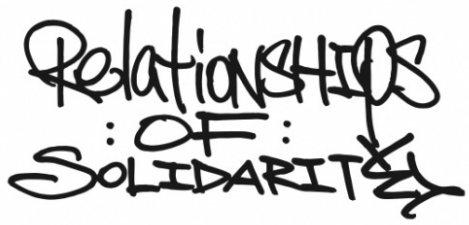
Similar to demonstrating an alternative to privatization within educational institutions, some governmental and NGO relationships offer an opportunity to teach people working within these institutions cooperative methods of approaching "development" and governance. Many governmental institutions or NGOs do not live out their highest values since they wage wars, oppress the marginalized by denying access to social services, and execute paternalistic forms of "development" in "underdeveloped" countries; still, they theoretically exist to serve and empower all people, just as cooperatives do, so they are more receptive to learning cooperativism. Red Root (Worker, Philippines) takes this to heart in pursuing contracts with their federal government. The projects for which they apply are typically informational or educational (e.g. designing a poster for rural areas sharing information about financial assistance programs for farmers). Red Root maintains an attitude that, no matter the other activities of their government that are deserving of critique and even active resistance, the programs they selectively support align with their values. Additionally, they know that someone is ultimately going to do them, and it is better if an enterprise with cooperative values completes the projects both to imbue them with cooperativism, as well as to prohibit an enterprise with profit-seeking motivations from completing the project and potentially leveraging competitive and harmful language or cultural cues in the public resource they design.

Build Youth-to-Youth Infrastructure

Members of the CRJ (Network, Americas) were invited and their participation fully funded by the School of Economy in Adalusia, Spain to attend a social economy conference in Spain. While there, several coopyouth connected with others and ultimately formed a partnership they call "the Alliance of Youth in the Social Economy (Allianza de Jovenes por la Economia Sociale)." The CRJ Chairperson is a strong proponent of pluralism in approaches, and this partnership flows from this perspective. Within the alliance, cooperators are interacting with young people advocating for various iterations

of social and mutualist enterprises (e.g. public benefit corporation) as well as advocating for the adoption of value-aligned organizational processes by all types of enterprise (e.g. participatory budgeting). Through this solidarity alliance, they are able to educate others about cooperativism, as well as learn and employ other complementary practices and philosophies into their cooperative praxis.

Correlated Issues



Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Relationships of Solidarity" in a cooperative are as follows -

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Many of the relationships of solidarity coopyouth have that are outlined in this section constitute connections and systems that would persist through the transformation of society beyond capitalism. Following, through solidarity relationships, cooperatives actively build the world they want here and now. Essentially, relationships of solidarity that adhere to the ethics of participation in cooperative systems and non-participation in exploitative systems; cooperatives also ensure their sustainability in the face of potential social, economic, and political changes. They do so by creating self-sufficient networks of people and groups that can support one another through those changes that are inevitable parts of social transformation, making strategic solidarity relationship building an imperative for the transition to and creation of a cooperative society.

CAPITAL

Given that conventional financiers typically discriminate against coopyouth because of their lack of credit history and collateral, as well as because they are employing an organizational model they deem illegitimate or too unfamiliar, solidarity relationships that circulate financial capital through the Cooperative Movement are of immense importance. The most powerful capital based solidarity relationships are, specifically, those redistributing wealth and actively correcting inequitable mechanisms of capitalism, as well as reparations to people and groups harmed in the past through various oppressive systems and practices. Coopyouth - and youth, in general - throughout the world categorically struggle to access sufficient capital to both survive, as well as to thrive through the creation of cooperative enterprises. The redistribution of wealth from older, wealthier cooperatives to youth is a key way to strengthen the Cooperative Movement overall and improve the lives of young people.

MEMBER TRANSITION

Youth and student cooperatives experience a higher degree of transience than most other cooperatives. Relationships that a given cooperative has with elders or other organizations often outlast the tenure of an average individual member. As a result, those relationships can be incredibly supportive in helping a cooperative retain institutional memory and organizational

sustainability during the repeating cycles of membership transition. For example, an elder member serving in an advisory role can help newer members find important documents, recall pivotal conversations, or even connect a current member with a former member for a conversation. Additionally, relationships with like-minded or affinity institutions (e.g. school) and individuals can broaden and sustain a cooperative's recruitment pool in order to ensure that there are sufficient members to replace those who transition out and sustain the cooperative.

Relationships of Coercion

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

While "coercion" can feel like a big word, it is present in many of our relationships, even those we may conceive of as friendly or cooperative. In any dynamic in which there is a power imbalance, there is nearly always some element of coercion – no matter the best intentions of those involved. Some such relationships can be managed for general benefit while successfully avoiding any ill effects; some examples of effective management of imbalanced relationships are included below and in the key issue section "Relationships of Solidarity". However, managing power dynamics is a tricky balancing act of trust and integrity. As a result, how these relationships are to be perceived and engaged with is necessarily different from those relationships in which power is clearly shared, values are aligned, and there is faith in all parties.

NON-COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS

Interacting at some time or another with a regulatory entity, profit-maximizing vendor or supplier, financier, or other institution that does not adhere to the Cooperative Identity or any comparable philosophy is inevitable for most cooperatives. "Virtually all cooperatives must function in the marketplace" (MacPherson, 1998, p233). In this context, the marketplace is the network of capitalist exchange monitored and moderated by the nation-state system. Government and conventional banks are central to maintaining the world's predominant economic marketplace and are, by far, the most notable non-cooperative institutions that most cooperatives must interact with at sometime during their start-up and operation. Navigating these relationships is more challenging for cooperatives than conventional enterprises, as they can result in mandating the adoption of structures or practices that can degrade the Cooperative Identity.

Government

In the words of cooperative scholar A F Laidlaw, "The strong embrace of governments ends with the kiss of death for cooperatives" (1980, 69). Nearly all cooperatives in the world exist within a legal

jurisdiction that technically requires for them to register with the government and - subsequently - be monitored and regulated (e.g. taxed) in perpetuity. Many cooperatives; however, choose not to register or incorporate for various reasons, two such main responses being either a prohibitive level of bureaucracy involved, or an ethic of "non-participation" in exploitative systems. The latter reason speaks to the "master's tools" concept, which - when applied to the cooperative context - implies that a cooperative commonwealth or society cannot be built using the tools of capitalism or empire. While engagement with a government entity may not seem to degrade Cooperative Identity - some examples of which are outlined in "Relationships of Solidarity," it can be a slippery slope. The most common way in which governmental relationships can have a cumulative degrading effect are, first, by requiring the adoption of a governance structure incongruent with the cooperative's membership, culture, and activities. Secondly, an issue that is most applicable in countries with explicitly repressive regimes, governments degrade the Cooperative Identity by threatening audits or censure for conducting activities or speaking on issues considered to threaten the government's authority or reputation. An example of a more severe audit is when a government seeks to stifle ideological challenges that paint them as oppressive, repressive, or immoral (e.g. anti-State viewpoints) by threatening the closure of the cooperative or even punishment for individuals. More common and less extreme audits can take the form of a local municipality aggressively pursuing minor code infractions by a cooperative because they deem it undesirable (e.g. student housing cooperatives having more residents than is allowed by zoning codes, but are compliant with building safety and health codes).

Financial Relationships

Just as with government entities, relationships with financiers – individual or institutional – can be key examples of the "master's tools" for cooperatives. Not all financial institutions themselves are inherently coercive, as governments are in their constant assertion of authority and right to violence; however financial institutions and individual funders can structure relationships with recipient cooperatives coercively. Financial relationships can be broadly broken down into two categories - loans or credits that must be repaid (sometimes with interest) and grants that do not need to be repaid. Most financial relationships are moderated by agreements or contracts between the two parties that establish a meaningful level of "control" and "ownership" of the cooperative by an outside party (i.e. the lender or grantmaker). Funders may condition their financial participation by dictating how the money is to be spent and requiring it be tracked and reported a certain way, no matter the needs or capacities of the cooperative. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most such funders are "capitalist realists," capitalists, or others who seek to maintain the status quo, which gives greater meaning to the sentiment and title of a powerful collection of essays on the non-profit industrial complex, "the revolution will not be funded."[1] While a funder may not have a vote in the cooperative, voting is not the most significant nor most powerful expression of democracy and self-determination: "the democratic character of cooperatives appears and must be tested in many ways besides membership meetings [...] democracy [can be embedded] in both structure and operation" (Laidlaw, 1980, 36-37).[2] Financial relationships that mandate control of the fundee by the funder is standard practice in the public and private sectors, across grant-making and financing. In fact, in most modern cultures throughout the world, people consider it ethical and reasonable that someone giving money to someone else gets to dictate how it is to be used, in defiance of the logic that the recipient is mostly likely to be successful if they are able to manage the money as they are familiar and practiced, as well as the logic that the recipient is both the best assessor of their own needs and how to use money to meet those needs.

- Ineligibility: Many financiers refuse to provide loans or credit to cooperatives, often by claiming insufficient knowledge of the model (i.e. they don't know "how" to fund the cooperative) or simply not recognizing the model as legitimate (i.e. since the organization does not prioritize profit above all else, they do not think it is viable). Most frequently, financiers providing loans or other forms of credit will compel an individual within the cooperative to sign a "personal guarantee" in order for the cooperative to be considered eligible. A personal guarantee places all of the cooperative's liability on the signing individual, meaning that the individual would be

personally responsible for paying back any money borrowed, rather than allowing the cooperative to be liable as an organization. This is in stark contrast to how conventional corporations, in many jurisdictions internationally, are granted “personhood” which, in turn, serves to protect executives and Board Directors from liability for mismanagement or malfeasance within the corporation - which is often perpetrated by these same individuals (read more about this in the section on “Corporatism” in “Words Mean Things'') This, then, is contradictory in the context of cooperative enterprises because it obfuscates the real reason why financiers refuse to give to cooperatives – due to a cooperative’s ownership and governance structure, as well as its non-compliance with capitalist frameworks, it is harder for the financier to exercise direct control. Essentially, the cooperative model is inherently incongruent with how most conventional funding relationships are structured, as it inherently rejects and resists coercion by outside parties.

1 The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex. Cambridge, Mass: South End Press, 2007.
2 In the course of Laidlaw’s discussion of cooperative democracy, he lays out eighteen distinct ways in which democratic character can be assessed in cooperatives beyond membership voting. These reasons range from gender representation in all roles of the cooperatives, considerations for subsidiary cooperatives or initiatives, transparency of information, a rejection of the “expert” paradigm, and other powerful and accessible measures.

COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS

Despite relationships between cooperatives and cooperators seeming to be safely assumed to be ones of solidarity, there are times when these dynamics or the cooperatives themselves have been corrupted through uncooperative practices or behaviors. Many times, the corrupting practices or behaviors are not undertaken out of malice, rather they are acted upon with good intentions but via a perspective on cooperativism that is uninformed or unexamined. Many of these missteps can be understood through the framework of “capitalist realism,” outlined in the “Words Mean Things” section. Those relationships coopyouth have with cooperative institutions and elders that are corrupted to the point of coercion typically involve questions of governance and capital, just as the most common coercive relationships with non-cooperative entities revolve around those same issues of governance and capital.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Gencisi / Youth Deal Cooperative	Worker	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe

Asia-Pacific Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC)	Network	Governance	-	Asia-Pacific
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
La Ventanilla	Worker	Service (Ecological Preservation & Tourism)	Mexico	Americas
Red de Juventud (CRJ)	Network	Governance	-	Americas
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Woodcraft Folk		Service (Education)	United Kingdom	Europe
Youth Cooperative Hub	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	South Africa	Africa

NON-COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS

The vast majority of coercive relationships coopyouth reported having were with decidedly non-cooperative institutions, those with the ultimate goal of exercising control or maximizing their own profit.

Government

Three of the cooperatives interviewed remarked upon government mandated actions they were – or are – being forced to take that will change how their cooperative functions. Of the below examples, there is only one that offers a "solution" to these mandates, while the others are held up as examples of strong cooperatives weathering legislative requirements and still experiencing success while acknowledging the impact this coercive regulation has on their potential.

- Temper Rigid Structural Mandates with Flexible Workflows: Red Root (Worker, Philippines) shared that all incorporated cooperatives in the Philippines must have distinct "corporate" and "cooperative" activities, essentially identifying all governance activities as "cooperative" and all other activities as "corporate." One of the ways in which Red Root manages this split is by leveraging an incredibly successful and egalitarian project-based model for their work, which elegantly incorporates aspects of governance in the day-to-day. This project-based model that breaks the cooperatives functioning down into smaller, relatively autonomous units also diffuses leadership throughout the cooperative, rather than confining it to elected or formal roles within the "cooperative" functions of the organization (read more on this in the key issue section on "Structure and Participation"). This type of design safeguards against a drift towards

inauthentic, titular leadership that can result from having a legally mandated Board with formal titles and authorities assigned to specific individuals. While Red Root has been experiencing success with this model they believe complies with the federal regulation, it does raise questions about whether or not government auditors would agree that they are sufficiently complying, as well as what consequences might be if the auditors rule the cooperative to be out of compliance.

- Respond with Intention, Not Unexamined Compliance: The Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) is currently in the throes of responding to an updated national cooperative law, which – upon initial reading – is an improvement from the last. One small element of the expansive legislation that was improved with this revision is the change in the number of founders required for a cooperative to incorporate from ten to five. While this is better, five is still a prohibitive number for many prospective cooperatives that can functionally have as few as three potential founders. While Youth Cooperative Hub had over ten founders, the law impacts many other aspects of their operation. They do not yet know precisely how complying with this updated legislation will ultimately impact their cooperative; however they anticipate having to make real structural and procedural changes. They shared that they will make these changes very intentionally and with analysis, rather than simply complying. Having already faced something similar to the above, Vio.me (Worker, Greece) was recently compelled to incorporate formally with their local government in order to maintain possession of their factory and the land on which it sits. The factory was initially squatted and reclaimed by local residents from its non-local owners, which they then turned into Vio.me. Incorporation at this stage is, then, formalizing the transfer of ownership in the eyes of the State to the cooperative, even though the cooperative views the space and resources as collective community property. Vio.me upholds an ethic and practice of "non-participation" with coercive entities and systems, so this coerced incorporation is a challenge for the cooperative. The only reason why Vio.me must comply is the State's "right to violence," which they can and would use to take the factory away from the cooperative and community. Vio.me ultimately determined that the risk of violence was too great to hold out and pursue a path of total non-participation.

Resistance

In some instances, some of those cooperatives interviewed pushed back against coercive mandates from government bodies.

- Defiance: In Mexico, Ventanilla (Worker) was faced with an interesting dilemma following a hurricane that destroyed most of the mangroves in the watershed they work to restore and sustain after previous tropical storms significantly damaged the ecosystem. The government decreed that no new mangroves were to be cultivated or placed until it was able to develop rules and procedures outlining the work. Ventanilla's purpose is to preserve their local ecosystem and all the life it supports long into the future, which required cultivation to begin as soon as possible given that the mangroves root flora and fauna into the watershed which would then be washed away into the ocean without them as ecosystem anchors. The cooperative determined it was better to cultivate mangroves illegally and risk the repercussions of subverting governmental regulations, than it was to risk the survival of their ecosystem and way of life. They planted many mangroves and their work still continues today, years later. It remained illegal to cultivate mangroves for six years after the hurricane, long after much of the animal life and its habitat would have disappeared. The needs of the ecosystem in which the cooperative operates and most of the membership resides, are best understood and considered by those impacted by changes to that ecosystem. In the case of Ventanilla, they understood that their authority and stewardship was more important than that of the government - which prioritized maintaining centralized authority and compounding its power, rather than empowering people to make their own decisions at the level of their community.
- Persistence to Precedent: As discussed above, often cooperatives are actively excluded from potentially coercive regulatory and financial systems because the model is harder to

"understand" - i.e. control - than conventional enterprises. Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark), one of the very first cooperatives to be incorporated in the country for many years, was deemed ineligible for a cooperative-specific taxation status by regulators because the regulators had grown unfamiliar with the statute and model. Additionally, as a small worker-cooperative in a country with a Cooperative Movement comprised almost exclusively of consumer food, financial, and insurance behemoths, Knowledge Worker did not align with what many Danes - including those within the government - were familiar with as a cooperative. Through much effort and self-advocacy, they pushed through and convinced regulators to afford them their cooperative tax status, paving the way for new cooperatives to receive that benefit in the future without having to go through the same arduous process.

Financial Relationships

Overall, the coopyouth interviewed had not been able to creatively leverage conventional outside capital, and were more often excluded from even attempting participation in conventional financing systems. While these financing systems are not ideal for most cooperatives, they are sometimes the only option for needed capital so exclusion from the systems can cause a cooperative to be unable to launch or scale. However, some youth have formulated creative, community-based funding methods that are further outlined in the key issue section on "Capital."

- Government Benefits: Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) was started by a group of unemployed young people who met in a career training center. In Denmark, regular visits to the center are mandated for all active recipients of federal "unemployment" benefits. Together, the group collectively leveraged their individual benefits to help launch the cooperative. The government took issue with this usage of benefits, as they considered the cooperative members to be now "employed" within a business and thereby ineligible to receive the benefits. The cooperative members resisted and asserted themselves as small-business owners, which did not preclude them from being beneficiaries, and through the process, ultimately received a determination that their actions were, in fact, legal and acceptable. This difference in treatment between (often less wealthy) employees and (often more wealthy) business owners, while beneficial to low-income people developing cooperatives, lays bare the corrupted pro-capital priorities of the government in its support of conventional enterprise over the wellbeing of rank and file workers. Knowledge Worker's members were certainly not the first to take advantage of this "loophole," but their status drew the attention of regulators who somehow deemed their activities ineligible.

COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS

Most of the challenging relationships coopyouth have had to manage within the Cooperative Movement were reported to be with elements of the movement infrastructure - i.e. with federations and associations that claim to represent the Cooperative Movement nationally or regionally. The second largest grouping of coercive relationships the coopyouth interviewed encountered addresses when a cooperative is created by elders in order to serve youth. In such instances, the transition process from elder to youth control is often not easy or simple, and - in some instances - the transition never happens.

Paternalism

Within the Asia-Pacific region, the ICYC (Youth Network, Asia-Pacific) has had consistent struggles with their host federation, the ICA Asia-Pacific, as they exercise a great deal of surveillance and control over the youth committee. They are required to send all their newsletters and external communications to the regional federation prior to general distribution, and money that was given to the coopyouth by a member country is being withheld despite requests for access. As was noted previously, the Asia-Pacific region is the only region that has not yet complied with the ICA's resolution that each region have a fully-empowered (e.g. voting, elected by the youth committee)

youth member on their Board. Additionally, the region has unilaterally initiated coopyouth endeavors and activities (e.g. regional youth summit) without engaging any coopyouth, their cooperatives, or the ICYC in the process. Overall, those coopyouth interviewed within the region shared that they felt the region's values were not congruent with those of the region's coopyouth. The ICYC has experienced a great deal of frustration, especially because they cannot identify a specific person or reason for why they are so disempowered and ignored, and, as a result, struggle to figure out a solution to what may be a cultural, rather than personal or administrative, problem. This paternalism also impacted the reach and effectiveness of the research for this toolkit, as outlined in the "Methodology" section.

- Compromise as First-Next Step: CRJ (Youth Network, Americas) has also experienced paternalism in their relationship with the regional ICA Americas federation. The youth network would like to be able to determine its own membership eligibility criteria, principally in order to make membership in the network open to any coopyouth in the Americas, whether or not an individual has a dues paying relationship with an ICA member. Generally, cooperatives and cooperative federations pay dues to the ICA Americas, individuals are not a type of member. Many youth in the Americas don't have a cooperative near them or relevant to them that is a dues paying member of the ICA Americas. As a result, the basic membership requirements - when applied to the youth network - are essentially prohibitive to many otherwise interested and engaged youth members. The Americas region rejected the youth network's request to self-determine its eligibility requirements, though a compromise was mediated via which the network may have a two-tiered membership structure that can include any and all interested youth, and those youth who have dues-paying affiliations. Those who are not considered dues-payers cannot participate in formal spaces or participate in governance, which is disappointing given that a key task of ICA infrastructure is movement governance. While this is still an expression of paternalism justified by capitalist notions of capital and ownership, the compromise open membership model does allow for the CRJ to build identity and solidarity as a larger group. By growing their community, identity, and culture as a group of coopyouth, that may then be able to pursue operational and governance autonomy from the regional Board, either through continued negotiations in which they then have more power due to greater numbers and community cohesion, or they may pursue establishing a fully autonomous association outside the scope of the ICA structure. Similarly, the Youth Committee (Network, Global; formerly Global Youth Network) has faced challenges in trying to negotiate its membership eligibility standards as it has formalized within the structure. It's recent transition from a less empowered Network to a formal Committee of the ICA has brought the issue back up for consideration and, with the new formal status, there is more power at play and the stakes are higher. The Executive Committee of the Youth Committee has evolved a membership eligibility standard that adheres to the ICA's desire to ensure all participating youth are somehow affiliated with a dues-paying ICA member, but that also seeks to ensure that recruitment of members to the Youth Committee is primarily the responsibility of youth, themselves. The drafted policy that would accomplish this, and which also removes a burdensome requirement that regional ICA Boards had to approve all youth members from their jurisdiction, had yet to be finalized and passed at the time of the release of this toolkit.

Elder Initiation to Youth Control

A unique occurrence within some youth cooperatives is the transition from an "incubated" youth cooperative to full youth control. While elder to youth transitions are unique to youth, this process has parallels to paternalism development models used by elders and institutions with more power to groups with less power, especially in instances of international development by wealthier countries in poorer countries. An especially powerful example of the challenges of shifting from elder to youth control is the ICYC (Network, Asia-Pacific), which was initiated many years ago by elder teachers. Today, the committee is only theoretically owned and controlled by its youth committee members, as they have internal integrity and autonomy (i.e. can convene, make decisions, elect people to positions within the committee), they are not granted voting seats on the

region's intergenerational Board, not allowed to decide membership eligibility or to be in charge of assessing new members, and are unable to access organizational funds. The regional Board and leaders refuse to fully grant them autonomy. A more successful transition happened during the founding of the Woodcraft Folk (MSC, UK) in the early twentieth century; however, it was not without its challenges. While youth were heavily involved in the creation of the organization from its conception, all funding was provided by elders and elder institutions. It was reported that there were struggles over how and for what the funding could be managed and used between the elders providing money and the youth putting it to use. A century later, the cooperative is entirely governed by youth and has greatly diversified its funding to include a mix of membership dues, donations, and grants.

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Relationships of Coercion" in a cooperative are as follows -

COOPERATIVE CULTURE

Culture within a cooperative can be a balm to the impacts of unavoidable coercive relationships; it can also be harmfully shaped and defined by those same relationships. It is hard to know how the requirements of relationships with government and funders impact a given cooperative's culture and potential, as much of the structural or procedural dictates are imposed upon the cooperative from the outset (e.g. Board of Directors required to incorporate). Still further, these kinds of structural or systemic mandates are so widespread throughout the world, it can be hard to imagine what else is possible. More generally, any form of outside control in a cooperative – be it funding conditions or restrictions on membership – degrades the Cooperative Identity of a group. Within youth cooperatives, this is especially damaging, as it can be the first interaction a young person has with what they think is cooperative culture, which may lead them to either reject cooperativism or embrace and propagate a corrupted version. For those coercive cooperative-to-cooperative relationships, this is especially troubling and negatively impactful on the cooperative culture of both the coopyouth organizations and the often older cooperative institution exercising paternalistic control. These kinds of relationships poison and weaken the defining culture of the Cooperative Movement. Self-determination is a requisite for strong cooperative culture.

CAPITAL

One of the most common corrupting mechanisms in cooperatives and organizations of all kinds is nearly any relationship undertaken to secure capital necessary for operation. While the conditions placed on borrowing or accepting capital from another person or organization - such as changing structures or practices to reflect the wishes of the party providing capitals - may be considered normal or conventional, they constitute an integrity degrading form of external control within cooperatives for which autonomy is both a Principle and a necessity. As a result, how and whence capital is acquired largely determines the extent to which a cooperative must engage in coercive relationships.

STRUCTURE & PARTICIPATION

Multiple cooperatives specifically noted how government and funders have dictated some aspect of how they structure and operate their cooperatives. Many, if not most or all, of the cooperatives interviewed have likely been compelled to structure or shape their cooperative in some way, but did not choose to make special note of it as it has been so normalized and accepted within society. Specifically, many cooperatives automatically adopt a Board of Directors, given its ubiquitousness throughout conventional business and cooperative enterprises, despite them not being at all inherent to the Cooperative Identity. This kind of structural assumption can be understood through the lens of "business ontology" that plagues the Cooperative Movement and is explained in more detail in the "Words Mean Things" section "Dirty Words," in the longform version of the toolkit. Youth have demonstrated considerable ingenuity in designing and operating their cooperatives, in spite of outside influences. It is worth considering what coopyouth could imagine and manifest without such coercive interventions.

Cooperative Development

> *Comfort, ostentation, luxury, and waste are the outcome when development is regarded as a goal, rather than a means and a starting point for progress and human and social well-being.*
>
> Father José Arizmendiarrieta

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SUMMARY

"Development" is a fraught term, as – due to the ubiquitousness of capitalist values - it has come to be associated closely with "growth" and "expansion" in relation to capital. Additionally, it can be used to obfuscate processes like gentrification, in which low income communities are displaced by property and land owners choosing to develop higher "value" properties for wealthier people. By growing the amount of financial investment in a community in a way that makes rent, goods, and services in the area more expensive, this process is lauded as "development," but at incalculable costs of culture, relationships, history, and broad-spectrum affordability as it essentially changes

who can live in a place. “Cooperative Development '' rejects such capitalistic framings in its embrace of development as a constant process and as a striving for holistic betterment that extends well beyond notions of capital growth or property expansion. Developing one’s personality to be more cooperative, or even shrinking the scope of a cooperative’s activities in order to meet the needs of workers for fewer responsibilities are both examples of cooperative development. “Cooperativism is fundamentally an organic process of experiences'' and cooperatives are “an experience of perpetual development” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 114, 112). There are key time periods within a cooperative’s life cycle that are more notable as times of development, those times when transformation is happening with explicit intention and at such a scale that it needs to be supported with additional resources, participation, and/or organization. What resources, how people are recruited to participate in, and the methods and mentality used to manage these key periods of development have great bearing on how cooperative, i.e. how successful, the transformations will be.

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Starting a cooperative and expanding or evolving a cooperative’s activities both typically require an infusion of financial capital or material resources - even if the enterprise does not structure its operations around fiscal transactions. Conventional for-profit and non-profit enterprises have relatively easy access to financial systems (e.g. conventional banks) that regularly support these aspects of an enterprise’s lifecycle. However, as outlined in the key issue section on “Capital,” these systems actively exclude cooperative enterprises or demand compliance with structural and procedural standards that degrade the enterprise’s Cooperative Identity. Coopyouth are doubly excluded from these systems, by virtue of their “lack” of experience, credit history, and/or collateral. As a result, some of the most creative financing strategies have been evolved by coopyouth during periods of cooperative development, by leveraging whatever capital, labor, or relationships they already possess collectively as a group.

PEOPLE

Developing a cooperative is often framed as an unconventional type of conventional business development; however, business development literature and practices typically focus entirely on organizational structure, financial portfolio, market research, and other aspects of an enterprise that have little or nothing to do with the specific people involved. In fact, many business development frameworks take on more of an “if you build it, they will come” mentality in designing an organizational structure that they then fill with people. With cooperative development, the main task is organizing people according to their needs and abilities. “First people, then cooperatives” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 14). There are cooperative development methods that also employ an “if you build it, they will come,” in which a professional developer will “incubate” a cooperative enterprise then slowly relinquish control of to a group of members. As discussed at various points in relation to elders creating programs and organizations for youth, these transition processes are incredibly challenging, as its inherent paternalism has the potential to be fatally disempowering to the cooperative’s eventual membership, and the process then sometimes results in a cooperative being constantly overseen by the professional developer to ensure it does not “fail.” How cohesive a membership is anecdotally has more bearing on the success of the cooperative endeavor than what product or service they offer or their provision and distribution strategies. In a strong cooperative group, if one strategy doesn’t pan out, sufficient relationships and trust have been built that the group can pivot to a new idea if they so choose. Cooperative development focuses on the development of individuals and their relationships with one other, first and foremost.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Often, during phases of intentional development in a cooperative, there is a great deal of logistical and administrative work that has to be coordinated. Of that work, the bureaucracy that many

cooperatives have to navigate if they are compelled or choose to interact with a regulatory (e.g. municipality for a permit) or financial (e.g. moneylender) institution is especially notable. The external pressures on the internal development process are hard to estimate effectively, given the lack of control the cooperative has over those processes. Pages of paperwork, hours spent on customer service calls, and reading through highly technical documentation just to figure out what paperwork needs to be completed and which phone number needs to be called can be enough to sink a blossoming cooperative endeavor. “The cooperative mystique is like quiksilver; put an official finger upon it, and it slips away” (Laidlaw, 1980, 40). Additionally, sometimes the institutions will try to put a stop to the project by declaring it illegal, requiring the cooperative to apply for so many permits that the filing fees become prohibitive, or simply putting up roadblocks that can only be avoided with institutional influence, personal relationships with power holders, or an unreasonable amount of patience and persistence. Most of the administrative challenges within cooperative development processes are external, and can be attributed to bureaucracy, incompetence, corruption, or a mix thereof. However, some processes don’t require any participation with outside systems, making them much simpler.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Albanyan CICS	User	Savings & Credit	Nigeria	Africa
Alchemy Collective Cafe	Worker	Wholesale/Retail (Food & Beverage)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Gencisi / Youth Deal Cooperative	Worker	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe
ICA Youth Committee (fka Global Youth Network)	Network	Governance	-	Global
ICA Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC)	Network	Governance	-	Asia-Pacific

La Ventanilla	Worker	Service (Ecological Preservation & Tourism)	Mexico	Americas
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Repaired Nations	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Youth Cooperative Hub	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	South Africa	Africa

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By and large, most of the creative capital solutions employed by the coopyouth interviewed involved some level of starting with something seemingly insignificant and incrementally growing their resources and capital by continuously leveraging what they had accumulated at key points to invest in more opportunities for financial growth.

Borrowed Equipment & "Spec" Work

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) borrowed a computer and did speculative (i.e. with no guarantee of payment) work in order to build a portfolio of completed projects. They were ultimately able to get paid contracts on the strength of that portfolio, the earnings from which they slowly began to reinvest in the cooperative by purchasing additional equipment.

Un- & Under- paid Labor

During Red Root's (Worker, Philippines) process of building their portfolio through unpaid work, their members needed to work other jobs to meet their needs. As they started to earn money as a cooperative and reinvest funds back into the organization, they accepted less payment for their labor in order to build the cooperative to a scale that could provide all members sufficient income. Repaired Nations (MSC, United States) has largely depended on volunteer or under-compensated labor to power its initial years of existence, similar to all the coopyouth networks interviewed for this toolkit. Most networks and representative entities within the Cooperative Movement for youth do not initially have - and sometimes have no plans for - any income generating activities and much rely on donations and grants, which typically aren't awarded to organization's without a significant track record of activities and accomplishments. There is a saying in English, "we don't know which came first, the chicken or the egg;" in this context, coopyouth do the seeming impossible by doing the very things they need money for using their unpaid and underpaid labor in order to "earn" money in the eyes of grantmakers and donors. Needing to "earn" or do enough to "deserve" money needed to survive and thrive is a symptom of capitalism and "capitalist realism," discussed more in the "Words Mean Things" section called "Dirty Words."

Incremental Fundraising

Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) grew spinach from seed and sold it, then used the funds

from the spinach sales to run a bake sale. With the bake sale money they earned, they organized one of their first training events for which they charged some registration fees. Before this process, funders were uninterested in supporting them, though once officials from a governmental agency learned of the educational event they executed, they received a considerable grant to continue that work. Similarly, Alchemy Collective (Worker, USA) began by building a small, mobile coffee cart as cheaply as they could. From the cart, they began to sell coffee at various events (e.g. farmers' market) until they had enough money to rent out a storefront. The storefront didn't have running water or a bathroom, but the cooperative still managed to have a steady and growing customer base. After garnering sufficient community support by becoming well known in the neighborhood for their coffee and customer service, they conducted a community crowdfunding campaign in order to retire the cart and move into the larger, full-service retail space around the corner that they still operate today. The Youth Committee (Network, Global; formerly Global Youth Network) used a similar incremental approach by beginning with a very small amount of money given by its host organization, the International Cooperative Alliance, and told others about the contribution in order to demonstrate the trust the movement had in the organization. This outreach attracted additional funders that felt "safer" contributing money after the group had effectively been cosigned by another cooperative entity. After each new donation, the Chair of the Youth Committee was able to attract increasingly larger funds until they amassed just shy of half a million USD.

Seize the Means

One of the most powerful ways in which some of the coopyouth interviewed accessed the costly resources they needed to develop their cooperative was to literally seize the means of production from capitalists. Vio.me (Worker, Greece) occupied and took control of a capitalist-owned factory that had ceased production as a result of an economic recession, after the operation of that factory ceased to be profitable for its passive owner. This strategy has been employed by cooperatives in the Americas and Europe in manufacturing, retail, and housing over the past few decades, and is perhaps one of the simplest and most effective ways to obtain the capital and resources needed to build a better world.

Shares & Solidarity

In order to design and begin operations in the factory they seized from the capitalist sector, Vio.me (Worker, Greece) depended solely on individual contributions from their immediate community and ecosystem of impact. To do so, they collected initial member shares from members, and hosted a series of solidarity events with various fundraising elements (e.g. raffles, games). Through these heavily community-based financing mechanisms, they were able to buy the materials and equipment they needed to begin operations with the existing collective wealth of their community, while also elevating community awareness and engagement in the work and aims of the cooperative.

PEOPLE

The fundraising tactics employed by Vio.me (Worker, Greece) had a twofold impact of raising needed start-up capital, as well as building broad-based community support for the activities of the cooperative. Adjacent to this process, Vio.me explicitly asked the community to advise them on what they should produce in the factory, and through the direct engagement process it was collectively determined that if the cooperative were to use the factory to manufacture sustainable cleaning products, it would be of the greatest service to them. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the work of the cooperative was in incredible need by the community and beyond - and as part of Vio.me's continued engagement with their neighbors, even educated those interested in how to make cleaning products at home. Through their intentional organizing methods engaging their broader ecosystem of impact, the cooperative is supported by and considered an integral member of their local community and, thereby, less vulnerable in the face of unexpected events, such as a global pandemic. The start-up process for the Youth Committee (Network, Global; formerly Global Youth

Network) was entirely unfunded and coordinated through the work of various volunteers - with a slew of other responsibilities - scattered across timezones, languages, and cultures. While the realities of this organizing context greatly slowed how quickly the Network could develop, the Chair of the network interviewed for this toolkit reports that the slow pace of the process allowed them to build distributed grassroots power that is more representative of coopyouth globally. The coopyouth who were drawn to and engaged in the work were truly committed, as a result, and the organizers had time to develop trust in and relationships with one another, both of these aspects have served to make the network stronger, thereby less susceptible to cooptation or corruption.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Bureaucracy and tedium are centerpieces of most kinds of organizational development that require engaging with regulatory or financial institutions. For example, Ventanilla (Worker, Mexico), a cooperative restoring and maintaining their local watershed, was prohibited by the government from working to repopulate mangroves decimated by a hurricane. After the hurricane, the government told people to wait to conduct ecological restoration work - which ultimately took the government six years. The cooperative chose to disregard the governmental prohibition and plant new mangroves illegally, but ethically and necessarily. If they had not chosen to just continue their important work, enough time would have passed that much of the watershed flora, fauna, and all the kinds of life it supports would have washed away into the sea without the rooting and foundational mangrove trees. Ventanilla was able to persevere through seemingly insurmountable bureaucracy through a commitment to their values, that they knew they evolved with their unique expertise around their own ecosystem of impact, rather than falling victim to external systems that may claim moral superiority or to know more about their own lives than they do.

Just. Keep. Meeting.

In a similar vein to keep working according to one's values and the immediate needs of the community - even in the face of bureaucratic authority, a common thread that arose through the interview process was the commitment to "just keep meeting," no matter what literal or figurative storms, downturns, or periods of uncertainty the cooperative may experience. This sentiment is especially important in the context of cooperative start-up processes, when there is seemingly less to lose, and it is much easier for individuals to drop-out or lose faith in the process. Gencisi (Worker, Turkey) initially began as a media endeavor that did not work out, but the group continued to meet for almost two years until they evolved the shape and strategy of the cooperative they operate today. They also extended this practice in the response of their cooperative to the Covid-19 pandemic, which helped them to persist in their work through crisis, which is a type of development in a cooperative that is typically unanticipated and unprecedented. For more on how they just kept meeting during the pandemic, and even engaged people outside their cooperative in the practice, review the key issue chapter on "Crisis and Conflict."Similarly, during many of its initial years of development and operation, the ICYC (Network, Asia-Pacific) had no funding, a vague mandate, and only part-time volunteers that consistently transitioned out of participation every few years. In spite of these challenges, ICYC just kept meeting and engaging with any and all youth who were willing and able to participate in order to keep the endeavor alive, slowly evolving an identity, membership, and slate of activities. In many ways, the network "kept the light on" until a cadre of youth with sufficient time, resources, and vision could dedicate themselves to realizing the organization's cooperative potential. Albanyan CICS (User, Nigeria) reported that, at times, they've not had sufficient funds with which to provide the credit or savings services for which the cooperative was founded in the first place. However, the cooperative has a practice of continuing to meet weekly and treat those meetings as spaces of fellowship and education, as they find their broader cooperative purpose in learning and working in community with one another, not just providing financial services. Prioritizing fellowship and social activities within a cooperative serve to break the "business ontology" mold imposed by "capitalist realism," which suggests cooperatives are only businesses trading in financial capital in a competitive marketplace. By acknowledging that real

cooperative work extends well beyond the activities that get recorded on an enterprise's Balance Sheet, even to the extent these priorities may cost the organization money or other resources, is a key part of cooperativism that clearly demonstrates it is not just a business "alternative" or "kinder, gentler form of capitalism." For more on "business ontology" and "capitalist realism," refer to the "Dirty Words" section of "Words Mean Things."

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Cooperative Development" in a cooperative are as follows -

CAPITAL

Many elements of cooperative development require some level of capital infusion. Whether a cooperative can access enough capital or not for a planned project or unanticipated crisis logically and greatly shapes the outcome of any given incident of development within a cooperative. Less obviously to many, the source of that capital – and the conditions related to its use – profoundly impact whether the development initiative strengthens or degrades a group's Cooperative Identity. For example and as mentioned in this section, when capital is solicited within the cooperative's community in incremental and personal ways, relationships and morale are strengthened as a result and the cooperative is not compelled to change how it functions or the design of how it aims to function.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

In instances of development in a cooperative that involve taking on additional responsibilities, expanding or changing the enterprise's activities, or engaging new people, it is absolutely imperative that the development members' skills is at pace with the organizational development. True ownership requires full understanding of what one possesses, so if a cooperative develops so quickly members lose sufficient understanding of how and why the enterprise is doing what it does, it can have deleterious results. For example, if a cooperative takes on a group of new members in order to expand their operations, but does not have sufficient orientation and training opportunities for those members, it can foster conflict due to misunderstandings, result in unknowingly bringing on individuals with uncooperative personalities and behaviors, and - as a result - degrade the Cooperative Identity of the enterprise.

RELATIONSHIPS OF...

For many of the coopyouth interviewed, phases of development were bolstered or made wholly successful by virtue of solidarity with other cooperatives or cooperators and members of the broader community. For others, relationships of coercion with regulatory or financial institutions hindered or nearly halted their cooperative development initiative. Just like for individuals, the importance of relationships with others becomes especially apparent for cooperatives when one is

trying to grow, improve, or facing crisis.

Conflict & Crisis

> *Teaching people the proper way for people to behave with one another, without confronting their selfishness, is like plowing the sea.*
>
> Father José Arizmendiarrieta

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SUMMARY

Crisis and conflict are unavoidable facts of life. Whether facing a personal tragedy, an interpersonal disagreement, a natural disaster, or managing the harms of structural oppression, all humanity shares the common experience of struggle. However, ever-increasing isolation in society due to the expansion of capitalism and its associated individualism, has resulted in crisis and conflict to become ever more relegated to the realm of the "personal." "Plants and people can defend themselves better when cultivated and supported in groups" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 69). Participating in a cooperative enterprise ideally helps to walk back isolation while providing opportunities to improve skills for collective management of crisis and conflict, as well as strengthening one's capacity for empathy and ability to care for others. Given the timing of the interviews and research for this toolkit, most of the reflections on crisis and conflict stem from experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Of particular note on the issue of conflict is the reality that it is very common for a conflict with a member to arise in a cooperative, to which the cooperative will logically respond to by pursuing a mediation process or endeavoring to solve the issue interpersonally. Quite frequently; however, these conflicts are purely symptoms of a structural or procedural inefficiency or inequity. While any interpersonal harm that has resulted from the issue needs to be addressed, it is not curative to approach such issues as personal problems when they are systemic or structural in nature. When those interviewed were asked about conflict and crisis, very few mentioned mediation or other classic forms of interpersonal intervention; likely accounting for this phenomenon. As a result, very

little on specific methods for mediating interpersonal conflicts is included, though strategies for how to avoid requiring such methods are detailed.

CONFLICT & EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Understanding cooperativism and the Cooperative Identity framework solely in the context of an enterprise is insufficient. Cooperativism applies to how enterprises are structured and operate, as well as the behavior of individuals. Learning how to embody cooperativism as an individual in community with others requires self-reflection, candid sharing of emotions, and the capacity to both safely engage in intimate discussions about values and behaviors, as well as manage any conflicts and emotions that may arise in the process. Some of the reasoning for conflict and emotional management not being taught in public spaces, such as school or work, is that it is commonly believed that these kinds of skills and engagements are unrelated to the objectives of formal education or labor. “People who are absorbed in solving external problems fail to remember that they have internal problems that are no less important. Their wellbeing, perhaps even their material welfare, depends more on the internal solutions than the external” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 17). People are responsible for themselves and all those with whom they are in relationship, so community spaces – especially – can and should be spaces of compassionate education in communicating, processing emotional experiences, and connecting intimately with others. These are the kinds of skills necessary for self actualization and community wellbeing – ultimately far more important than bookkeeping or writing governing documents.

CRISIS RESPONSE

Natural disasters, pandemics, warfare, economic depressions, and other large-scale crises are not everyday occurrences, so many people do not have much practice in how to best respond. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the entire world and provided countless lessons for both crisis response. The world watched as countries made decisions about industry and labor that doomed thousands to sickness and death (e.g. the mortality rate of line cooks in the USA rose 60% during the pandemic, while the overall rise in mortality rate was just 22%[1]). The boards of investor-owned firms and the legislators of governments, during crises, often task themselves with making decisions about peoples’ lives about which they have no familiarity or lived expertise. As a result, these decisions are typically overly general, one-size-fits-all solutions that do not reflect the diversity of the people and enterprises of those impacted. A crisis may be global in nature, but its impacts hit individuals, families, towns, and workplaces in different ways – impacts can be complex and disproportionate among people, even those in the same workplace. Cooperatives, however, understand that they are best equipped to make decisions about what is safe and healthy for themselves, for each of them individually and as a collective group; those decisions should then be supported by broader social systems.

[1] https://www.cnbc.com/2021/02/02/jobs-where-workers-have-the-highest-ris...

RELATIONSHIPS CAN SAVE US

Cooperative work ultimately amounts to organizing people, as even when organizing enterprises and events, what is ultimately being coordinated - through relationships - are our individual resources and capacities. “True wealth lies in the integral development of our personality” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 15). As outlined above, relationships and the skills we need to sustain them are what will ensure the survival, and even the thriving, of humanity. This is true both interpersonally, as well as at an inter-cooperative level promoted by the Sixth Principle, “Cooperation Among Cooperatives.” When Fagor, the first worker cooperative of the Mondragon federation of cooperatives, chose to shut down operations when their products were no longer sufficiently needed in the world, worker-members were given the option of retraining and

transitioning into worker-ownership at different cooperatives within the federation. Without those inter-enterprise relationships compelled and supported by cooperative culture and values, Fagor workers could have found themselves without a source of income and, as a result, may have been forced to relocate to find different work outside of the very culturally and linguistically unique, as well as largely rural Basque region in which Fagor was headquartered.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Alchemy Collective Cafe	Worker	Wholesale/Retail (Food & Beverage)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Gencisi	Worker	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe
Master Minds Producer Cooperative	Producer	Agriculture	Botswana	Africa
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative	User	Housing	United Kingdom	Europe
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Woodcraft Folk		Service (Education)	United Kingdom	Europe

Youth Cooperative Hub	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	South Africa	Africa

CONFLICT & EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) explicitly educates its members in emotional and conflict management, and they have found that training effectively depersonalizes conflicts that arise - insofar as it unlinks conflict in their cooperative space from conceptions of conflict as resulting from individual malice or personal failing. The basic understanding that is shared by members as a result of their emotional education is that conflicts are usually disagreements or misunderstandings - which are normal and okay, rather than intentional interpersonal harm. Further, the emotional reactions people have to disagreements or misunderstandings are what escalate and drive dysfunction in responding to riffs that are part of working and living with other people. Ultimately, because the cooperative understands the origins of conflict and the effect emotions have on conflict, no disagreement or misunderstanding is a deal breaker in their group, as they share the same values that persist despite disagreements, misunderstandings, and emotions.

Consensus-Based Conflict Resolution

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) has instituted a method for responding to conflicts when they occur that is also a tenet of consensus decision-making – they return to their base values and review them together in the context of the issue. This process maps onto their collective emotional education training that revealed conflicts in their group are always manageable, given that they share core values and are committed to the same ends. In order to be prepared to undertake this consensus-based method when conflict happens, the shared values need to have already been well articulated and written down (like the Cooperative Identity), so they are easy to refer to and remain accountable to them even in the presence of strong emotions or communication challenges. Having a moment to re-acknowledge shared commitment to core values can help facilitate people differentiating their emotional reaction to something in the moment from how they feel about their work, their relationships with other members, and their cooperative in the longer term.

Cooperative Values for Survival

Woodcraft Folk (MSC, UK) related that many of their members had been involved in establishing and maintaining mutual aid programs (e.g. food distribution) in their local communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Rather than the technical skills of authoring governing documents or bookkeeping prompting their participation, it was remarked that the likely reason why so many members immediately and “naturally” connected with their community to create infrastructure to withstand the health crisis was due to the internalization of cooperative values. Rather, their cooperative education and experience had impacted them on an emotional and moral level, that now directs how they move within the world and how they engage with the people around them.

CRISIS RESPONSE

Vio.me (Worker, Greece) manufactures ecologically sustainable cleaning products and readily conceptualizes their work as part of making society function, in both the absence and presence of crises. To this end, they explicitly chose the activities of their cooperative to be goods or services that the world genuinely needs and will continue to need even without capitalism. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, this ethic played out in a very real way; they viewed themselves as being specially situated to help their community survive the health crisis by providing much needed disinfectant and sanitation products, as well as teaching their community how to make these things on their own - which does not make “sense” to do in a capitalist context. They saw the pandemic not as an opportunity to profit, but as an opportunity to serve. By being an enterprise that focuses on

producing things people truly need, their cooperative remains relevant and vital no matter what crisis or opportunity demands a response.

Overall, most of those interviewed mentioned that their cooperative expressed the belief that crisis was a time to be as compassionate and flexible as possible. This flexibility extends even to the point of ceasing operations in order to care for each other - to making what are conceived of as “bad” financial decisions within capitalism; rather than being rigid in expectations of each other and thereby prioritizing the financial survival of their enterprise over the wellbeing of the people in it.

Crisis Funds & Financing

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) set aside savings for emergencies and crises, as mandated by their federal government. When that fund was depleted in the throes of the Covid-19 pandemic, they used their strong relationships with a financier to take on debt financing to complete some of their projects that they otherwise would not have been able to fund due to the slowdown of work and income. These options are not available to most cooperatives in the world, however, when possible, dedicating a portion of surplus to an emergency fund is a good practice. Such a fund, too, can be used as a measure of the cooperative’s financial fitness to take on debt from lenders, if additional external funding is needed.

Cooperatives Must Change As Needs Change

Two of the cooperatives interviewed, Alchemy (Worker, USA) and Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) evolved new products and services in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The new offerings both helped their customers through the pandemic and kept the cooperatives solvent when they were forced to halt some of their main income generating activities. The Youth Cooperative Hub began producing personal-protective-equipment, including some of its textile working members beginning to manufacture fabric face masks. Alchemy, shortly before the pandemic hit, had softly launched a coffee subscription program that delivered bags of coffee to people at their homes on a regular basis. The program was developed by one of the cooperative’s founders as part of their legacy when departing the cooperative earlier in the year, and it was not immediately embraced by the membership or their market. However, once their locality was placed under strict stay-at-home orders, the subscription program took off and became the cooperative’s main source of income while their retail storefront was closed.

Importance of the Individual

Crises impact people disproportionately, so it is imperative that cooperatives adjust to allow for members to participate according to their individual needs and abilities as they change in the face of crisis. The initial focus of a cooperative in a time of crisis is to meet the varied needs of its members, other enterprise concerns are lower priority. “First people, then cooperatives” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 14). Three of the cooperatives interviewed – Gencisi (Worker, Turkey), Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK), and Red Root (Worker, Philippines) – all altered their requirements for participation explicitly and proactively at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the allowances that were made (e.g. allowing for non- or late- payment of dues) had not been used by any members at the time of the interviews, but the cooperatives felt it was important to make those changes collectively, first, before an individual person needed the changes and was forced to “ask” for a personal allowance. There are many reasons, even irrational ones, why individuals might feel uncomfortable asking for what they need in a time of crisis; they may experience feelings of guilt or shame for needing “more” or “differently” than other members. As a result, proactively making space for the needs of members allows people to feel fully supported and to not unfairly perceive themselves as a “burden,” rather to understand that there is a crisis and any struggle within that context is not a personal failing.

RELATIONSHIPS CAN SAVE US

At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of those interviewed reported that sustaining contact and communication with all members was a natural step they took when many workplaces or meeting places were shut down or shifted to online. Master Minds (Producer, Botswana) has a small membership, so the group assessed their contagion risk to be minimal and chose to continue meeting regularly in person in order to both sustain the cooperative and to stay in close contact to support one another in a time of hardship. Gencisi (Worker, Turkey) continued meeting with one another online, and benefited so greatly from this practice that they extended it beyond their membership to support others. The cooperative began hosting Instagram Live sessions to which they would invite other cooperatives and affinity groups to discuss how everyone was managing the realities of the pandemic, as well as share things they had learned about how to work better remotely or in isolation. Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) supported their cooperative members by applying for international crisis funds that they then passed through to their members that needed financial support, as many of their individual members did not have the resources to apply on their own. This work was in addition to the work the cooperative did to help some of its members pivot its offerings to goods or services relevant in the pandemic context (e.g. producing PPE). Without Youth Cooperative Hub supporting the various coopyouth enterprises throughout their region, many of the cooperatives would have ceased to exist as a result of the pandemic, and the Cooperative Movement would have lost a large contingent of youth members.

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Conflict & Crisis" in a cooperative are as follows -

COOPERATIVE CULTURE

Culture is created by the people in a group and how they choose to communicate and relate to one another. If a standard of “professionalism,” or the false compartmentalization of a person’s emotional life and unique identity to private arenas, is present in a group, that becomes the culture. In times of crisis and conflict, people experience a range of challenging emotions. Understanding how to process these experiences collectively and support one another through challenging feelings is no longer common knowledge in our overly individualistic society. Professionalism, in how it restricts and denies full self expression, is not cooperative. Further, if a strong cooperative culture is present, when faced with conflict or crisis, responding in a way that is compassionate and flexible is second nature.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Whether or not a cooperative seeks to teach the whole of a person how to be cooperative, versus just teaching people how a cooperative enterprise functions, has great bearing on how well those individuals and their cooperative can weather conflict and crisis. If emotional and conflict

management are taught within the cooperative, it allows for members to experience disagreements, misunderstandings, and even crises with more flexibility, compassion, and success. “Homo Cooperativus” education and training is perhaps the biggest contribution the Cooperative Movement gives the world.

CAPITAL

Conflict and crisis can fell any group, especially if the skills to manage all that comes with those things are not taught. Within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, several cooperatives would have run out of capital and ceased to exist or ended up in considerable debt, if they did not proactively approach the situation with calm and flexibility. Emotions can run high in any conflict or crisis, and if capital decisions are navigated and made while a cooperative is experiencing a high level or group tension or reactivity, poor decisions can easily be made. Most obviously, too, having additional capital set aside explicitly for crisis situations can help a cooperative considerably in managing the immediate material challenges a tough situation can present. However, most of the youth cooperatives interviewed did not have the capacity to maintain such a fund, so - specifically within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the attitude and approach to addressing the situation as a collective was the more important factor in their survival and success in the face of the difficulties of the health crisis.

Capital

> *Even the credit union on our street, named “Cooperative Credit Union,” wouldn’t fund us.*
>
> Alchemy Collective (USA)

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Generally, capital is understood as some form of asset, traditionally referring to financial assets or assets that are ultimately convertible into money had or owed. As capitalism has increased its influence in all spheres of life - including our relationships with each other and the earth, some people have developed conceptions of capital theoretically outside the financial context. “Social capital” is a term now used to refer to the relational wealth a person has in a social system; the depth and quality of relationships, level of influence in a community, the level of trust they have

from others. This concept of capital in a social and relational context is employed by many in the Cooperative Movement; though, often without considering its deeper implications. This oversight is likely because exploring social capital does align with striving to understand how strong social systems are built, how they function optimally, and appreciating how relationships benefit us as individuals and groups are worthy endeavors. However, while the things that social capital describes are absolutely essential for the wellbeing of individuals and the survival of humanity; they are fundamentally different from transactional goods like currency that we understand as capital and to which we apply behaviors incongruent with the practice of relating with one another. People can never "afford" to trade away relationships. The value of a person to themselves or to someone else cannot be quantified. As a result, for the purposes of this exploration of capital, the discussion both rejects the application of capitalist concepts to people and relationships and thereby focuses solely on financial capital, which can be broken down a number of ways - most simply as currency (e.g. cash), debt (e.g. credit, cash owed), and equity (e.g. ownership stake).

ELIGIBILITY

For the vast majority of cooperatives, the capital contributed by its members is the core element of the organization's financial portfolio. However, in times like start-up, crisis, expansion, and other instances of cooperative development, a cooperative may need to solicit capital from an external source. Cooperatives are often ineligible for conventional capital products (e.g. loans, grants) offered by for-profit banking institutions and even non-profit grantmakers by virtue of their enterprise model or a lack of corporate status. Alchemy Collective (Worker, USA), after having successfully scaled their enterprise from nothing to operating their bespoke coffee cart in a rented storefront, was unable to get a loan from the financiers in their neighborhood despite their clear track record and collateral. The "Cooperative Credit Union" that was on the same street as their storefront would not lend to their cooperative. Even supposedly cooperative financiers will deem coopyouth enterprises ineligible for reasons that are often not clearly articulated, suggesting perhaps a bias against young people with less experience than the average enterprise entrepreneur. Similarly, during the Covid-19 pandemic, both Red Root (Worker, Philippines) and Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) found themselves ineligible for government lending programs to support businesses due to their use of the cooperative model. Given the common determination that cooperatives are "ineligible" for most capital sources, many cooperatives are forced to pursue DIY or creative funding options that draw capital directly from their own communities (e.g. canvassing the neighborhood for contributions, throwing a fundraising party). This type of funding strategy can also build social cohesiveness and strengthen the cooperative's collective vision, but it can also drain a group of their energy and capacity depending on the success of the endeavors. Still further, there are funds for which youth cooperatives may be specifically eligible, cooperative or not, that are worth considering.

EXTERNAL CAPITAL = EXTERNAL CONTROL

A key reason cooperatives may pursue unconventional sources of capital (e.g. direct, individual donations) is the tendency of most conventional capital products and services to require some level of outside control of the enterprise by the financier. Outside control or influence over a cooperative almost universally amounts to degradation of the organization's Cooperative Identity. As outlined in "Relationships of Coercion," the style of control executed by loan providers and grant makers can range from dictating how the organization must be structured, how its decisions must be made, how any money is to be spent, and/or how its money is to be tracked and reported. Not all external capital will exercise degrading external control, but the relationship of control to capital is so normalized within capitalistic culture that it is important to be aware of the potential of its influence.

Personal Guarantees

An especially egregious and widespread form of control exerted by funders, particularly when doing

business with cooperatives, is the mandating of “personal guarantees.” A personal guarantee is a loan contract that makes an individual signer liable for any and all losses that the cooperative might experience. In these situations, this essentially restructures the cooperative by corrupting the distribution of “ownership” among the members to a single or few people, as risks and benefits are no longer shared equitably by members - as the loan contract ultimately implicitly and explicitly trumps internal policies, which is contrary to the Cooperative Identity. Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) was forced to have its managing member sign a personal guarantee for loans when the cooperative’s portfolio weakened as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The ultimate impact of this arrangement on the cooperative is not yet known, but the staff person reported that their emotional and working relationships within the cooperative have been affected.

Host Institutions

A form of external capital control relatively common within the Cooperative Movement for youth cooperators is the relationship between a coopyouth organization and a larger, wealthier host institution (e.g. national federation). Often, these host institutions will provide a small amount of money for the youth organization to use, which is often explicitly or implicitly conditioned. Specifically and commonly, the coopyouth enterprise will design itself to allow in any young person in their geographic area as a member. The host organization refuses to allow the coopyouth group to self-determine its membership, typically stating that only youth who are formally affiliated with one of the host’s dues-paying members can be eligible for membership. The justification for this position being that dues-payment is the only form of economic participation in the cooperative, and those youth unconnected to a dues payment are undeserving of membership or its benefits. The over-association of ownership with a single fiscal transaction is an oversimplification of economic participation, as well as in conflict with the needs-based orientation of cooperativism as well as the First Principle of “Voluntary and Open Membership.” There are existing practices - such as sweat equity - used within cooperatives for members lacking in fiscal capital or when fiscal capital is not the primary need of the cooperative. Moreover, youth becoming acquainted with and trained in cooperative philosophy and practice contributes to the viability (fiscal and otherwise) of the Cooperative Movement over time, in fact, youth participation is needed to sustain the movement into the future. This can easily be considered a form of participation in the economic functions of the cooperative. Finally, individual youth typically do not need the majority of the benefits provided by host organizations or their dues-paying members, as they and the dues amounts themselves are most often designed to meet the needs of well-established cooperative enterprises or professional-class individuals. As a result, it is important that autonomy and values be clearly articulated between coopyouth and a host organization to avoid entering into a dynamic in which the host feels entitled to exercising control and violating the cooperative’s right to self-determination by virtue of their providing financial support.

REPARATIONS & REDISTRIBUTION

The Cooperative Movement and all its members exist within capitalism’s ecosystem of impact. Capitalism is an economic system that has committed harm against various peoples, as well as continues to perpetuate inequitable and unjust distribution of wealth. There are two methods of capital distribution that cooperatives can and should undertake to both address and correct the harmful impacts of capitalism, past and present - reparations and redistribution of wealth, respectively. Reparations consists of those that benefited at the literal and figurative expense of others in the past (e.g. businesses, governments, and people that profited from the slave trade) giving their accumulated wealth to those communities that were harmed and exploited in the past. While individuals directly responsible for committing some past harms are deceased, there are businesses, governments, and people that continue to unduly benefit from those past harms by still possessing and leveraging stolen wealth - which ultimately is both a form of reparations and redistribution. To actively combat and transform the inequitable distribution of wealth - in real time - within capitalism, it is necessary to redirect financial flows from the wealthy to the poor.

Redistributing wealth is one corrective mechanism for cooperatives that have become capitalistic to use to regain their integrity and realign with the Cooperative Identity. It is essential to note that when wealth is redistributed, so, too, is power. The systematic disempowerment of certain peoples to the benefit of others is the fundamental wrong being righted, capital is simply a symptom of this imbalance and a tool to use to move towards a cure.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Alchemy Collective Cafe	Worker	Wholesale/Retail (Food & Beverage)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Green Campus Cooperative	Multi-Stakeholder	Wholesale/Retail (Fairtrade Textiles)	Canada	Americas
Global Youth Network	Network	Governance	-	Global
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
Master Minds Producer Cooperative	Producer	Agriculture	Botswana	Africa
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Repaired Nations	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative	User	Housing	United Kingdom	Europe

Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Youth Cooperative Hub	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	South Africa	Africa

STATEMENTS REFERENCED

NAME	YEAR	EVENT	LOCATION
International Year of Cooperatives Closing Ceremonies Statement	2012	United Nations International Year of Cooperative Closing Ceremonies	New York City, New York, USA
Youth Statement on Cooperative Leadership	2015	ICA Global Congress & Conference	Antalya, Turkey, Europe
ICA Global Youth Network Resolution	2019	ICA Global Congress & Conference	Kigali, Rwanda, Africa

ELIGIBILITY

The most common way in which coopyouth have managed their exclusion from conventional capital systems is by avoiding them entirely. In some instances, those cooperatives that financed themselves without support from conventional financiers “earned” the respect and attention of conventional funders after much time and work. While this is wholly unjust, especially given the fact that most unconventional funders (e.g. individual community members) have more at stake than conventional funders (e.g. corporate banks with limited liability structures), it is worth noting. Finally, one of the cooperatives interviewed was the recipient of special funds for which youth were exclusively eligible.

Speculative Labor

Red Root (Worker, Philippines) slowly scaled themselves using their own labor and borrowed equipment. They pieced together small contracts until a bank was willing to support them with a credit account. Now, Red Root finances many of its projects using debt or by taking on operational loans to cover costs until the contract is paid at the end of the project. While these graduated methods of doing speculative labor were not part of their original financial plan for the enterprise, they report that having considerable credit they gained by scaling their enterprise the way they did is what allowed them to survive the work slowdown that took place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) slowly and painstakingly scaled their operations by, first, growing and selling spinach. Using the funds from the spinach sales and personal contributions, they ran a bake sale. Eventually, they were able to build up their finances sufficiently that they could pay the necessary upfront costs for educational events for which they charged a registration fee. Once they were successful in running income generating events, a government agency took notice and subsequently provided them a grant, which marked the beginning of a still enduring funding relationship. Both cooperatives did work and committed resources not knowing if the contributions would result in the scaling of their cooperative, but their

speculative work paid off in the end.

Gradual, Stacked Fundraising

Alchemy Collective (Worker, USA) used a mixture of community crowdfunding and small loans from individual, long term customers to slowly - over years - acquire enough capital to both secure a lease for a full service cafe location and purchase necessary equipment for the space. Both the Global Youth Network (Network, Global) and Repaired Nations (MSC, USA) pursued relatively small grants (e.g. 5,000 usd) and then leveraged the first with additional funders as proof of their capacity to get additional funding. During the interview process for the toolkit, both cooperatives had scaled their operations for the year through the creation of a financial daisy chain of different funds. During that year, they are committing some of the funding to support them in developing a long term financial model (e.g. paying for labor to apply for grants, solicit sponsorships, etc.).

Service Sector

Many coopyouth choose to start a service-based cooperative (e.g. education, counseling), primarily because it requires much less start-up or development capital than industries such as manufacturing or retail. Over half of the respondents to a 2018 study on coopyouth entrepreneurship reported working in service industries (International Organization of Industrial and Service Cooperatives). Of those cooperatives interviewed for this study, just over half of the sixteen are in the service sector. In this way, most of the coopyouth initiated their cooperatives based on things they could do that did not require any capital at all.

Youth-Specific Funds

There is much more funding (grants, specifically) available for youth-specific projects by non-cooperative institutions than there is funding for cooperative-specific projects by non-cooperative institutions or for youth-specific projects by cooperative institutions. In other words, it is much easier to get funding for being youth than it is for being cooperative. Master Minds (Producer, Botswana) received a large founding grant from the national Youth Ministry, which allowed the cooperative to scale its operation in a way that seems sustainable. The grant was specifically for youth projects and did not stipulate the cooperative model as a requirement. Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada) operates within a university structure, and the university has provided the cooperative significant financial support that allowed the cooperative to achieve an operational scale by virtue of its status as a student-run organization. The Cooperative Identity is often stronger within youth cooperatives than youth or student identities, so these funding options are sometimes forgotten or not considered; however, as illustrated, both public and private institutions typically have funding prioritized for youth and students.

Common Equity

A strategic way in which a cooperative can be treated as a conventional non-profit, an entity which enjoys broader eligibility among grantmakers - in particular - as well as lenders, is to structure the cooperative as common equity. In this model, all surplus is reinvested in the cooperative and demutualization is made impossible, as all of the cooperative's equity is considered an indivisible reserve. This model does preclude equity payouts, but not member bonuses that can be structured to essentially amount to profit-sharing by another name. If a cooperative operates with this equity model, it is able to incorporate in most places as a non-profit or comparable, thereby making the cooperative eligible than the average cooperative for funds ranging from charitable grants to conventional loans. Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK) uses a common equity model for a few pragmatic and theoretical reasons. On the theoretical side of things, residential property prices change according to the "market," i.e. an abstraction, and do so at different rates at different times due to factors beyond the control of the cooperative. SSHC does not pay out every member according to what value the property has accrued during their tenure because that value change typically has no relationship with the member's contributions or behavior. More pragmatically, in

order to calculate each member's payout, the property would need to be appraised in some fashion that is likely to either be costly or ad hoc. Managing member transitions is much simpler without equity payouts for this and other reasons, especially in youth or student cooperatives that have especially high rates of member turnover. Still further, it is often easier to get a mortgage or other form of loan from most funders as a non-profit rather than a cooperative, purely due to the level of familiarity funders have with each model. The common equity model is used successfully by many group housing cooperatives, many serving mostly or exclusively student memberships, around the world.

EXTERNAL CAPITAL = EXTERNAL CONTROL

Sometimes external capital can be acquired without being heavily conditioned by the giver, but in most contexts, capital comes with "strings attached." Coopyouth have successfully figured out strategies to access external capital without significant external control of their cooperatives. Further, in some financial relationships in which coopyouth are not granted sufficient autonomy, they are actively striving against that control.

Small, Non-Controlling Contributions

As outlined above in the examples of cooperatives that stacked small grants, loans, or donations, these projects have largely avoided the negative byproduct of potentially degrading external control by taking on capital in small enough amounts that the funder does not feel the need to oversee spending, tracking or reporting. While this strategy is resource and time consuming, it typically sidesteps the dangers of having non-members consider themselves to be "investors" in the cooperative. Similarly, Vio.me (Worker, Greece) held several community events as fundraisers that brought in anonymous donations from individuals. These events and small forms of fundraising also facilitated community members becoming better acquainted with the cooperative and both interested and engaged in its success, without feeling entitled to any level of operational control.

Personal Guarantees

While none of the cooperatives interviewed had determined a way to get around required personal guarantees, two cooperatives identified somewhat of an inverse strategy; accessing capital for which only individuals are eligible and leveraging that "personal" funding for their cooperative. One of the founders of Repaired Nations (MSC, USA) received an individual fellowship from a separate organization in the same community. They then treated that fellowship as the compensation for their otherwise uncompensated time doing community and legal work for the cooperative. Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) utilized the individual unemployment benefits all of the cooperative's founders were receiving from the federal government, to collectively finance the start-up of their enterprise. Both examples use individualized capital sources for collective benefit in ways that are unlikely to disrupt or corrupt the equitable distribution of ownership and control within the cooperative.

Host Institutions

If a youth cooperative is hosted by a large cooperative institution, it is essentially beholden to that institution should it choose to exercise some form of control (e.g. conditioning the use of funds to compliance with certain behaviors). The two regional cooperative networks interviewed for this toolkit - ICYC (Asia-Pacific, Network) and CRJ (Americas, Network) - both experienced this phenomenon and feel unable to further influence the dynamic. In the case of ICYC, they were given funds by a national federation within the region; however, regional federation leadership ignores their attempts at communication and refuses to distribute the funds. CRJ negotiated some degree of compromise with their regional host federation with regard to membership eligibility in their network, which now formally complies with the dues-paying standards of the host but also allows for youth unaffiliated with dues-payers to participate in informal events put on by the network. The

solution to this issue requires elder host institutions within the Cooperative Movement to voluntarily change their behavior. Specifically, this requires host institutions to actively decouple the notion that membership and ownership in cooperativism is only accessible via financial capital, as well as to acknowledge that giving someone financial capital does not entitle the giver to control the recipient - rather, their autonomy must be respected. Coopyouth have explicitly called for autonomy in these intra-movement relationships that involve capital in various collective youth statements - first in 2012 when calling for cooperative institutions to freely fund youth and other marginalized peoples within the movement, again in 2015 when explicitly naming the necessity of wholly autonomous and funded youth bodies within the movement's governance, and most recently in 2019 as part of a resolution introduced to and passed by the Board of the International Cooperative Alliance called for the funding and autonomy of all regional youth networks.

REPARATIONS & REDISTRIBUTIONS

Cooperativism, when practiced authentically and fully, has the capacity to repair past economic harms and correct current economic wrongs. The practices of giving financial reparations and actively redistributing wealth are; however, not often named explicitly within the Cooperative Movement. Repaired Nations (MSC, USA), a panafrican cooperative development organization, is a clear exception that actively and explicitly - using a self-help model - "creates redress for historic trends of oppression through cooperative training and development for collective ownership. We repair the effects of colonization and oppression by helping to weave interconnected communities into thriving, sustainable networks to equitably provide the essentials of life" (repairednations.org/about-us). Providing financial support to a cooperative such as Repaired Nations is a key way in which many in the Cooperative Movement can fully participate in reparations and redistribution, and is a move called for by coopyouth in various collective statements. The first recorded coopyouth statement was at the United Nations in 2012, when a group of international youth called for the transfer of funds from wealthy cooperatives to youth and other marginalized people specifically for them to develop cooperatives for themselves as they see fit. In 2014, coopyouth issued a statement that critiqued the predominant model for international cooperative events that prioritized the participation of wealthier people and cooperatives; they called upon wealthy cooperatives to specifically fund and center the perspectives of individuals and cooperatives most impacted by climate change, white supremacy, economic recession, and political unrest which serves as a form of both reparations and redistribution. The formal coopyouth resolution accepted by the Board of the International Cooperative Alliance in 2019 named that it is imperative that the Cooperative Movement fund the participation of youth in its events, as well as financially sustain the autonomous youth organizations within movement governance - without conditions. This resolution and final call presented the redistribution of wealth to youth as an imperative, rather than as a transaction for which something is owed or as a gift, as it is essential for the sustainability and success of cooperativism globally. More on the topic of Reparations and Redistribution is included in the key issue section on "Relationships of Solidarity."

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Capital" in a cooperative are as follows -

COOPERATIVE CULTURE

What financial capital and from where it is accessed can both shape how power and ownership functions within a cooperative, to the extent that it can degrade the enterprise's Cooperative Identity and cooperative culture. Conversely, a cooperative with a sufficiently strong cooperative culture may be able to selectively and intentionally leverage certain financial "master's tools" (e.g. loans from conventional banks) in ways that maintain the integrity and culture of the cooperative. There is a feedback cycle between culture and capital in most cooperatives.

RELATIONSHIPS OF COERCION

Most financial relationships, especially those with conventional or profit-seeking funders, engage in some measure of coercive influence over a cooperative. Coercive influence can range from dictating spending, surveilling activities, to requiring compliance with structural or procedural standards. In the contemporary economic context, the success of financial relationships often dictates whether or not a cooperative can scale to a level of sustainable operation. As a result, coopyouth will need to take strong outlined in these lessons, particularly in the context of coercive relationships, if or when they pursue any kind of external financing.

RELATIONSHIPS OF SOLIDARITY

The main way in which most coopyouth accessed external capital that did not violate the autonomy of their cooperative or degrade their cooperative culture was via relationships of solidarity. For some, this involved creating community events that both raised funds while nurturing relationships of solidarity with their neighbors. For others, this meant connecting with an individual - often, an elder - who leveraged their influence and power in solidarity with and to benefit the youth cooperative. Many available capital sources are examples of the "master's tools," in that they compel the recipient to comply with capitalist behaviors or other practices that degrade an enterprise's Cooperative Identity. As a result, prioritizing and participating in capital relationships that are borne of and sustained by solidarity enable cooperatives to build networks of exchange and care that will persist beyond the scope of capitalism.

Cooperative Culture

> *"The socialization of culture is inevitably followed by the socialization of wealth and even of power. We could even say that this is the indispensable condition for democratization and the socioeconomic progress of a people.*
>
> Father José Arizmendiarrieta

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Culture does not recognize the bounds of an enterprise, a political border, or other theoretically closed system. Culture can be transmitted across any real or abstract expanse, as it is created and maintained by people in how they communicate with and relate to others. In this way, it is possible to imbue social, economic, and political systems with the cultural values upheld within interpersonal relationships; humans can shape culture from the personal to the systemic. While cooperativism is often approached as theory and practice for organizations, the values espoused within the philosophy are necessarily applied to the level of the individual and interpersonal. A cooperative can help to create an environment that protects and sustains culture, the culture within the cooperative is ultimately a reflection of the culture and attitudes of the people within the cooperative. “Social formulas are only effective to the degree that those in whom they are embodied live up to them” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 14).

ENTERPRISE VS. BUSINESS

One of the key ways to ensure the primacy of the person in a cooperative is to divorce the notion of cooperative practice from a specific structure. The ubiquitousness of capitalism and its values throughout all aspects of our lives have fostered a business ontology, or the sense that the only way to organize society is into units of “business” that are then supported by a neoliberal nation-state system.Business ontology and its companion concept, capitalist realism, is outlined in greater detail in the “Dirty Words” section of “Words Mean Things.” The business ontology aspect of the overwhelming creep of capitalist ideology into lives of people throughout the world has had a deleterious effect on the Cooperative Movement, similar to the impact of the application of concepts like transactional value within personal relationships and self-worth. Nowhere in the Cooperative Identity is cooperative activity restricted to or defined as “business.” Limiting the cooperative imagination to goods or services only being shared via fiscal transactions in a government regulated marketplace effectively prohibits cooperativism from its full expression as a philosophy facilitating the social evolution of humanity. “Ideas and the mindset they entail and promote are no less indispensable to the proper functioning of our cooperatives than their facilities and machines” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 51). Cooperativism can apply to how family systems function, how communities manage natural resources, and how people can govern themselves without interference by external actors; it is a theory and practice that can be applied to nearly every aspect of human life. All of these endeavors and forms of relation can fit under the umbrella term “enterprise,” which is the term used within the Defining Statement of the Cooperative Identity and does not limit cooperative activity to any sector or structure. While the immediate work of many cooperators may very literally be the maintenance of a market-based business they are operating cooperatively, cooperators can and should aspire to much more beyond business, which is necessary in the collective enterprise to build a better world free of coercive and oppression.

PROFESSIONALISM

Capitalist culture has come to demand a tempered kind of behavior and presentation in workplaces and other public group settings. This expected “professionalism” typically demands that people

censor themselves by “code switching” (e.g. using only “appropriate” language and demeanor), only share “appropriate” aspects of their lives and personality (i.e. compartmentalization of the self), not openly display emotions, avoid conflict at all costs, as well as adopt an “appropriate” mode of dress and aesthetic. The often unspoken norms of “appropriateness” to which professionalism conforms are synonymous with white, Western (e.g. patriarchal, white supremacist, Christian), capitalist culture. Thereby, these standards of behavior and presentation alienate and even shame those people whose methods of communication and culture deemed “inappropriate” (e.g. Black, indigenous, people of color, queer, femmes, poor) in the professionalism framework. This standard even ultimately harms those it was designed to serve, particularly in its repression of emotional expression and mental health. Particularly in workplaces, in which many people spend roughly half of their waking life, ignoring the mental health of workers is both ineffective and inhumane. There has been a recent turn towards workplace “wellness” among some corporate leaders, however this shift remains profit-motivated, rather than motivated by a desire to genuinely support the true health and wellbeing of people.[1] Similarly, professionalism seeks to avoid potential conflict or discord – a regular part of everyday life, and in doing so does not allow for nor teach people how to have frank discussions around moral or ideological topics. Some of the harm of this denial of open discourse within the Cooperative Movement, specifically, is detailed in the “Dirty Words” section of “Words Mean Things.”

[1] A prime example of this perverse practice are the “ZenBooths” recently introduced in Amazon shipping and distribution centers. These are phone booth sized, windowless and dark boxes outfitted with a fan. Workers experiencing stress are encouraged to go into the boxes for a few minutes in order to calm down enough to return to work.

HOMO COOPERATIVUS

Culture flows from people, their actions, and their relationships with others, and takes the form of shared values, behavioral norms, language, and relational obligations. A person, then, evolves their individual identity based upon their various cultural affiliations - through community, they are able to see and know themselves.. “People are the foundation of all things. As the people are, so will their society be. If people are just, upstanding, generous, noble, and honest, society will also be just, upstanding, generous, noble, and honest” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 14). This notion invites complexity to cooperativism by its emphasis on the importance of the individual, perhaps confoundingly so, given the collective nature of the philosophy. Father Arizmendiarrieta explained this well: “Cooperative philosophy rejects both the collectivist and liberal [i.e. individualistic] conceptions of human nature. It recognizes the unique value of the individual, but insists that the individual cannot be totally him or herself without entering into creative, spiritual, and materially productive relationships with the world to which he or she belongs” (1999, 98). How each individual in a cooperative embodies and enacts cooperative behavior and communication dictates, in spite of structure, whether or not the culture within the organization is truly cooperative.

Hiring/Membershipping

The addition and subtraction of people, their personalities, and their influence in a cooperative - through membership transitions - has one of the biggest impacts on a cooperative’s culture. “Cooperativism is not about changing a company’s owners or managers, but transforming its nature and social function” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 98). If a given cooperative simply switches the role of an employee to a worker-owner – without nurturing and ensuring a change in mentality and disposition, the culture within the enterprise is likely to remain conventionally competitive. In some of the larger and wealthier cooperatives throughout the world, it is relatively common for the cooperative to prioritize hiring high-level workers with experience in enterprises that are similarly wealthy (which are typically not cooperatives), rather than in enterprises that are cooperative. In doing so, these enterprises are prioritizing other experiences (e.g. managing large financial portfolios) over cooperative skills and orientation, thereby bringing in competitively oriented

personalities to the cooperative which often serves to degrade the culture over time. This has been a significant factor leading to demutualization or the death of many cooperatives.[1]

[1] Nadeau, E.G. and Nilsestuen, R. (2004). Strengthening Cooperative Business Structures: Lessons Learned from Demutualization and Cooperative Conversions.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Gencisi	Worker	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
La Ventanilla	Worker	Service (Ecological Preservation & Tourism)	Mexico	Americas
Master Minds Producer Cooperative	Producer	Agriculture	Botswana	Africa
Comité Regional de Juventud (CRJ)	Network	Governance	-	Americas
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe

ENTERPRISE VS. BUSINESS

Understanding a cooperative and one's role within it as something bigger than a "business" or "job" dramatically transforms one's mindset — and thus, the culture of the cooperative. Vio.me (Worker, Greece) upholds the orientation that the cooperative "is your way of living, not just a job. You take

part in it and it in you." Others interviewed expressed this "more than a business or job" orientation in how they chose to structure and manage participation in their cooperatives. Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) considers their cooperative to be a platform that people can use when and how they would like to, rather than as a business to which each worker is required to report everyday at a given time. To facilitate this, Knowledge Worker members identify which projects they would like to work on, and don't come in to "work" when they are not actively participating in activities of the cooperative. Red Root (Worker, Philippines) uses a similar project-based work model that rejects conventional task distribution models by empowering people to participate as their needs and interests call them to do so, and in whatever graduated capacity makes sense for them at the time. If there is not sufficient interest in a project, that shows the cooperative that the work is either outside the scope or capacity of the cooperative. While both of these "work when you want to" models run counter to conventional business practices, both cooperatives have achieved financial and organizational sustainability with their methods.

Raison d'être

Ventanilla (Worker, Mexico) was founded when a generational split occurred in a cooperative that worked to maintain a watershed ecosystem and provide tourism and educational programs within and about the watershed. The cooperative roughly split between generations, when a group of youth members determined that the elder-led decision-making was prioritizing profit at the expense of the initial goals of their cooperative initiative. Essentially, the elder contingent of the membership had adopted a conventional business and profit-seeking framework that was in conflict with efforts to repair and sustain the environment in which the members of the cooperative lived. Specifically, the elder-led cooperative chose to create a zoo housing several exotic animals, which was one especially egregious aspect of a broader strategy to attract business from tourism brokers that brought in large groups from area resorts. The resort industry with which the brokers work are emblematic of exploitative and unsustainable tourism, as the resorts are mostly foreign owned walled fortresses that consume a huge amount of local resources and aggressively mediate the interactions of their guests with local residents, thereby limiting the potential financial benefit the community can gain from tourism. The youth found the zoo and the middleman strategy, in lieu of other forms of outreach or marketing, to be unethical and counter to the human, animal, and natural community -building and -restoring work with which they had tasked themselves. After starting a new cooperative without the older generation members, the youth undertook outreach to educational institutions throughout the world, which attracted visitors and supporters that were interested in Ventanilla and its community because of the important work they were doing, rather than customers seeking passive entertainment. Both cooperatives still exist side-by-side in the community today, though the youth cooperative has been more successful in the cooperatives' initial purpose of planting and nurturing the mangroves and animal life in the watershed.

PROFESSIONALISM

Vio.me (Worker, Greece) explicitly states that they reject any notion of professionalism in their cooperative, and ask that each person participate however they are most comfortable. Specifically, during general assemblies, they ask people to talk about what is going on in their lives, how they are feeling, and any fears they are having generally or about anything happening in the cooperative. Vio.me has "normalized" human behavior and emotions in their workplace, rather than deeming parts of the human experience unprofessional and relegating it to the so-called personal lives of members. Red Root (Worker, Philippines) also rejected the relegation of emotions and mental health to outside the workplace, and educated themselves on mental health, mental illnesses, and personality types in order to support themselves in working with each other. They report that understanding things like depression and how it can manifest for different people supports them in having reasonable expectations of one another, receiving the behavior of others with compassion rather than judgment, and – as a result – managing their cooperative and shared work more successfully. With regard to the calls of professionalism to avoid any discord or disagreement, the

CRJ (Youth Network, Americas) openly acknowledges that they have active ideological divisions within their organization. Instead of discouraging discourse in order to avoid potential conflicts, the group openly discusses the diversity of interpretations of cooperativism and other value systems with regularity. CRJ does not view conflict as unprofessional, but rather as a regular aspect of relating to and working with others.

HOMO COOPERATIVUS

Part of what likely supports the CRJ (Youth Network, Americas) in having challenging ideological discussions is its overall philosophy of cooperation voiced by its President that “you can’t just be a cooperativist at work.” In every conversation and interpersonal interaction, maintaining a cooperative mindset is absolutely essential to working together across ideological and other differences. In this way, the cooperators see and honor the complexity of one another, which prohibits them from severing an entire relationship over one instance of discord or disagreement. Similarly, following the founding of Ventanilla (Worker, Mexico) after an ideological division within an intergenerational cooperative, family members and friends were split between the two cooperatives. Despite the ideological differences that persisted, familial relationships and friendships across the cooperatives remained strong - which is a testament to the cooperativism practiced by Ventanilla’s members within all aspects of their life - and not just “at work.”

Teambuilding Activities

Master Minds (Producer, Botswana), upon experiencing issues with uncooperative members, evolved member programming to support people in developing more cooperative personalities. By conducting team building activities on a regular basis, the cooperative literally practices relating to one another as people beyond the context of the day-to-day function of their cooperative. Through that form of cooperating with one another beyond “work,” they report they have come to better understand each other’s attitudes and personalities, which has improved the functioning of their cooperative.

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Cooperative Culture" in a cooperative are as follows -

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Supportive learning opportunities for members to explore their emotional regulation and relational skills (e.g. group dynamics) can significantly help develop and sustain a truly cooperative culture. Such education and training focuses on the person, their personality, their methods of expression, and how they relate to others. This helps to teach people how to fully embody cooperativism not just in their participation in the cooperative, but throughout their lives and society.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSITION

Given that culture is defined and maintained by people and their relationships, how new members are recruited, selected, and onboarded has a tremendous impact on a cooperative and its culture. Many cooperatives have experienced harmful impacts of bringing uncooperative people into their organization without sufficient training or orientation to cooperativism, even to the point of demutualization.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

For a cooperative to truly contribute to the collective striving for social transformation, it must maintain a culture that views its efforts as more than just "business." In complement, embracing that In line with this is the reality that it is possible to build a better, cooperative world without requiring that every person be a member of a cooperative. Instead, if every individual can embody cooperativism on a deeply personal level, society may even be able to orient toward other forms of self-governance and organization even better than cooperation.

Social Transformation

> *Our cooperative founders wanted to achieve much more than just establishing and operating successful business enterprises. They were concerned for social justice and were motivated by a passion to help transform [lives].*
>
> *In the tradition of our founders, the Alliance too seeks [...] to show that same passion for social justice and transformation and a renewed vision of how cooperative enterprises in the 21st century can indeed build a better world by putting our Cooperative Identity, Values, and Principles into practice.*
>
> Guidance Notes to the Cooperative Principles

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

One of the greatest distinctions between the coopyouth movement and much of the broader Cooperative Movement is its explicit and actionable commitment to social transformation. While much of the language employed throughout the global movement speaks to “building a better world” and eliminating poverty, the framing is typically reformist. It focuses almost entirely on creating cooperative enterprises to address ills without taking action to resist, destroy, or abolish existing institutions or systems. Coopyouth during the twenty-first century have returned to cooperative discourse an analysis of what has caused societal ills in the first place, after a noticeable absence of such inclusion in official documentation for years following the Cold War, as outlined in the “Dirty Words'' section of “Words Mean Things.” In tandem with the naming of foes such as capitalism and its ilk, they assert the movement’s according responsibility to actively work to abolish the source of societal ills as new cooperative forms of enterprise are created. The 2014 coopyouth statement, which resulted from an autonomous and participatory process during the International Summit of Cooperatives, is entirely framed by its call to “transform society from capitalistic to cooperativisitic.” In the 1980 report to the International Cooperative Alliance congress, just as the Cold War was coming to a close and capitalism was “winning” ideologically around the world, A F Laidlaw shared similar sentiments to those found in the coopyouth statements. The “gap between rich and poor nations is not closing but becoming wider” and that “only earth-shaking changes can correct the imbalance of the have and the have-nots.” “In some countries, a whole new economic and social infrastructure will have to be reconstructed.” “The poor tend to remain poor until the whole structure or society is transformed. Simple reform is not usually effective, and besides it is painfully slow” (Laidlaw, 1980, 26-27).

The needed new economic order addressed by both Laidlaw and coopyouth requires a complete transformation of society and the Cooperative Movement beyond the fog of capitalist realism and its business ontology, as outlined in the “Dirty Words” section of “Words Mean Things.” Within a transformation framework, cooperatives are far more than businesses; rather they are social systems networked with one another to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of all those involved. There is an immense difference in philosophy and practice between the social transformation interpretation of the Cooperative Identity versus the ideology that cooperation is purely “better business.” These ideological divisions within the movement often logically track along identities of those who have power within capitalism and those who do not. Specifically, coopyouth, workers, and the poor tend to be those committed to cooperativism as an aspirational movement with a responsibility to pursue justice and transformation for all peoples. Some of the more powerful and wealthy tend to position cooperativism as just an alternative business model compatible with capitalism and state intervention. And, there are still others that practice cooperativism in a reformist manner that do so unknowingly in a “system of presumed virtue,” due to the ubiquitousness of contradictory value systems within society that can create understandable confusion. The “system of presumed virtue” is explained in more detail in the “Dirty Words” section of “Words Mean Things.”

Similar ideological and practical divisions are experienced by coopyouth outside the Cooperative Movement. Gencisi (Worker, Turkey) was in the practice Gencisi (Worker, Turkey) was in the practice of voicing their progressive and cooperative values publicly. Their values and explicit philosophy have not always been welcome or clearly understood by governmental or non-governmental entities. The cooperative therefore invested a great deal of resources to articulate, document and justify their values and philosophy. In cases of coercion from outside, the cooperative has assumed a cooperative attitude and kept its internal and external corporate processes fully transparent to third-parties. Issues such as government repression, among others, have a real impact on how openly or completely the Cooperative Movement discusses social transformation, making it all the more important that those who are safely able to speak on these issues do so for those who cannot. Youth within the Cooperative Movement and beyond often have “less to lose” simply because they

have less, in general, so - as outlined in the definition of "youth" in "Words Mean Things" - youth often take on the responsibility to voice dissent and demand transformation quite naturally; which is part of why so many of the successful social movements during this century's "spring" have been led by youth. "Ser joven y no ser revolucionario es una contradicción hasta biológica" (Salvador Allende).

MOVEMENT ORIENTATION

A cooperative philosophy that openly embraces social transformation adopts a movement orientation in two ways that are typically beyond the scope of conventional cooperative practice:

- it compels solidarity with all those working for justice and social transformationwhether doing so using cooperative structures or not, as more deeply discussed in the key issue section on "Relationships of Solidarity," and
- it acknowledges and names that there are systems, ideologies, and practices- both within the Cooperative Movement and beyond it - that must be abolished if a cooperative society is to ever be achieved; that things must both begin and end, they must *move*.

In other words, cooperativism as a philosophy is bigger than just cooperatives - "we have agreed on the cooperative, considering it to be ideally suited for solving urgent problems of social development and progress and for making effective contributions to the campaign for another social and economic order, with all that implies" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 93). In practice, this looks like imbuing cooperative work with the aims and values of other transformative movements (e.g. racial justice, climate justice, gender justice, sexuality justice), as well as supporting those active in other movements that seek to abolish the same systems and ideologies in opposition to cooperativism. Secondly, the movement towards a cooperative world involves abolishing - not just creating - things; transformation requires both ends and beginnings. Externally, the needed endings are often best articulated as the transformation of capitalism into cooperativism, and, internally, the ends called for are to some accepted forms of cooperative practice that are either no longer effective or known to be congruent with cooperative philosophy. As such, cooperativism is a constantly evolving philosophy and practice that "is the affirmation of faith in people, in work, in integrity, in human harmony, turned towards constant and progressive enhancement" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 100). This constant striving humbles cooperativism as a means to an end, and orients cooperative practice in service to the creation of a better world that we may not yet be able to imagine, rather than just to the creation of cooperative enterprise units.

FIRST-NEXT STEP

Often, the calls by coopyouth for nominal cooperatives/cooperators to adopt a more authentic and transformative understanding of cooperativism are defensively dismissed as idealistic and unrealistic. The defensiveness is presumably rooted in the reality that such calls for accountability do contain a degree of criticism, as very few people enjoy being told they are "doing it wrong." However, the transformative orientation to cooperative practice firmly views current cooperative systems, in whatever form, as a step on the path towards a better world - it is not framed as "doing it wrong" in this context, rather we can be "doing it better." Coopyouth are calling on all cooperators to strive for more than just greater comfort in the current moment, to strive for a world beyond and without capitalism and other coercive systems - whether or not that seems feasible in an individual's lifetime. "Great ideals do not need to be within reach to be useful" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 18). This is also a humble perspective, as it does not frame cooperation dogmatically or as the "ultimate" form of human organization, rather "cooperativism, which was born from action and experience, rather than theory, is something that we must conceive of and desire in the constant search for better forms of expression" (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 55). Coopyouth and other cooperators that embrace social transformation may not know every step towards achieving that goal, nor may they be able to describe in great detail this "better world" of which they speak, but

they understand cooperative practice to be the best first-next thing to undertake on the path towards those goals. In service to this orientation, the kinds of skills required of cooperators, such as emotional regulation and conflict transformation, are among some of the most basic things humanity needs to make successful preparations for a better world. “Cooperative efforts at transformation don’t know their own worth or value themselves exclusively on the basis of their economic results, and only rarely for what they mean for human and social training and maturity” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 37). In fact, these “soft” skills are often the most undervalued by capitalist cooperators, thereby revealing their core priorities. “It is unfortunate that there is no way to recognize on a balance sheet how much the people associated with a given cooperative have grown within a year [...it is one of the] most important tests of cooperative effectiveness” (MacPherson, 1998, 239).

SURVIVAL

The Sixth and Seventh Principles work in tandem and in service to cooperativism’s role in broad-scale social transformation. Both Principles seek to ensure the survival of the earth and all its inhabitants through solidarity and care. The Sixth Principle, “Cooperation Among Cooperatives,” directs cooperators to act in solidarity with their cooperative peers - to create societal systems that are wholly cooperative and thereby able to both replace existing and resist potential future coercive systems; to create a new and sustainable social and economic order. The Seventh Principle, “Concern for Community,” illustrates that cooperators exist within broader communities and ecosystems of impact that must also operate cooperatively to sustain themselves, regardless of whether or not each member or element of a given ecosystem has an explicit connection with the Cooperative Identity. Caring for all those in a cooperator’s community, regardless of their cooperative orientation or membership status, presents a pluralistic notion of “membership” within the Cooperative Movement that extends beyond just those that “pay dues” that deserves greater consideration in cooperative discourse. Overall, the Cooperative Identity supports individuals in meeting their individual needs and aspirations through collective work, and also provides direction for how individual cooperators and cooperatives, alike, are to interact with all those in their ecosystem of impact to ensure the survival of the greater community. While discussing the “survival of humanity” may seem extreme at times, it is a very real and increasing concern as the world and its inhabitants manage higher rates of extreme weather, more widespread public health crises, growing wealth disparity, and increasing armed conflict. Transformative cooperativism takes these realities into account and holds cooperators responsible not just for creating comfortable cooperatives, but for necessarily transforming society to build a sustainable world.

Youth Realities & Responses

COOPERATIVES REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION

Albanyan CICS	User	Savings & Credit	Nigeria	Africa
Gencisi / Youth Deal Cooperative	Worker	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe
Green Campus Cooperative	Multi-Stakeholder	Wholesale/Retail (Fairtrade Textiles)	Canada	Americas
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
La Ventanilla	Worker	Service (Ecological Preservation & Tourism)	Mexico	Americas
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Repaired Nations	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative	User	Housing	United Kingdom	Europe
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Woodcraft Folk		Service (Education)	United Kingdom	Europe
Youth Cooperative Hub	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	South Africa	Africa

STATEMENTS REFERENCED

FULL NAME	TYPE	INDUSTRY	COUNTRY	REGION
Albanyan CICS	User	Savings & Credit	Nigeria	Africa
Gencisi / Youth Deal Cooperative	Worker	Service (Education & Communications)	Turkey	Europe

Green Campus Cooperative	Multi-Stakeholder	Wholesale/Retail (Fairtrade Textiles)	Canada	Americas
Knowledge Worker	Worker	Service (Technical Assistance)	Denmark	Europe
La Ventanilla	Worker	Service (Ecological Preservation & Tourism)	Mexico	Americas
Red Root Cooperative	Worker	Service (Multimedia Design & Production)	Philippines	Asia-Pacific
Repaired Nations	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	United States of America (USA)	Americas
Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative	User	Housing	United Kingdom	Europe
Vio.me	Worker	Manufacturing (Cleaning Products)	Greece	Europe
Woodcraft Folk		Service (Education)	United Kingdom	Europe
Youth Cooperative Hub	Multi-Stakeholder	Service (Advocacy & Technical Assistance)	South Africa	Africa

MOVEMENT ORIENTATION

The various international coopyouth statements consistently conceptualize and call for the interpretation of cooperativism as a philosophy that supports an active social movement with radical and transformative aims that extend beyond creating cooperatives. All coopyouth statements were written collectively by youth from all different parts of the world, and they include youth from large, wealthy cooperatives that are arguably capitalistic, as well as youth from less wealthy cooperatives with more resolutely radical politics.[1] Overall, contemporary coopyouth have consistently stated that the Cooperative Movement is about much more than just cooperatives, and that working outside the Cooperative Movement proper and aspiring beyond the current societal and economic context is cooperativism's full expression.

Solidarity Beyond Cooperatives

For many coopyouth, solidarity with those outside the Cooperative Movement but that share transformative aims pragmatically translates into a responsibility to share their cooperative specific skills and resources with other progressive people and groups. Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) is a member of a networked social movement community, and they focus their contributions around building "democracy skills" through cooperative training that teaches people how to work, live, and play together in a way that is truly democratic, whether they are doing so within a formal

cooperative enterprise or not. Similarly, Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK) understands that the physical property they both live in presently and steward for the longer term benefit of many is a valuable resource. As such, they consistently offer use of their common spaces to area social movement groups, so they can comfortably conduct meetings and prepare for actions or events. Both Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) and Gencisi (Worker, Turkey) gift a great deal of labor to other youth with aligned values, specifically by aiding them in setting up their own cooperative systems. Skillsharing is a common practice among cooperators in the movement, though these coopyouth have specifically chosen to include as part of their regular work the sharing of cooperative skills with others outside the movement but with similarly transformative values.

Name Internal & External Foes

The 2014 statement, *Cooperate to Transform Society*, calls for the movement to be reorganized into one that is "bottom-up rather than top-down," as well as one that is explicitly and openly committed to the end of capitalism. The first part of that sentiment comments on inequalities within the movement that have created a "top" and a "bottom" in terms of wealth and power, and youth call for all those within the movement to acknowledge and address this reality of internal inequity and dysfunction. One of the key ways in which to reorganize the movement accordingly is via the practice of the Redistribution of Wealth to marginalized cooperators, as more fully outlined in "Capital" and "Relationships of Solidarity." The latter portion comments explicitly on the primary external foe of cooperativism and humanity - capitalism. All of the autonomous cooperative youth statements, recorded from 2012 onward, identify capitalism and/or neoliberalism as the major external foes of the Cooperative Movement that, accordingly, need to be abolished. The movement orientation that names foes and calls for their transformation also involves maintaining an ethic of "non-participation" with those named coercive and destructive actors within society, as outlined in both key issues sections on "Relationships." The strongest examples of intentional non-participation and participation are demonstrated by Vio.me (Worker, Greece), Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada), and Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark) which all have organizational ethics that guide them in which partners they should and shouldn't engage with, specifically along ecologically lines, as is outlined more below in the subsection on the "Survival."

[1] Attending the international events at which these statements have been authored is challenging and costly and often includes:expensive international air travel and lodging, visa requirements, significant time commitments for travel and attendance. As a result, most attendees typically are funded by their cooperative employers, meaning that those who attend are often staff (i.e. not members) from wealthy cooperatives who often adopt a passive role for fear of misrepresenting their employer. Youth deviate from this pattern more so than other groups, as there are scholarships for youth to attend cooperative events in some countries, and there are reduced registration rates for most events. It is, therefore, more likely a youth from a small cooperative can attend these events than a non-youth from a small cooperative. Further, when youth are funded by scholarships rather than by an employer, they are more likely to voice their own views rather than to act as a spokesperson for the entity that financially supports their participation. As a result, the coopyouth statements are arguably more representative of the global movement than those of adults in those same spaces.

FIRST-NEXT STEP

Father Arizmendiarrieta's work with local youth ultimately manifested in the largest federation of worker cooperatives in the world, Mondragon, as well as a university system sharing space and support with the federation. He believed "the ideal of the Mondragon Youth is to make this town the model for [other] industrial towns" (1999, 5). This mentality is shared by contemporary coopyouth, as they actively conceive of the work they are doing on a small scale with their friends can and will have much greater impact beyond their immediate context. Sheffield Student Housing Cooperative (User, UK) has a twofold vision for the ultimate impact of their hyperlocal cooperative work. By living

in the cooperative while a student and likely entering into the housing market for the first time, they become equipped with real, lived knowledge that they do not have to submit to exploitive rental housing situations for the rest of their lives, no matter their economic standing. It is quite common within student housing cooperatives that individuals become effectively empowered through the experience and often go one to pursue or create other kinds of non-extractive types of housing in subsequent life phases, sometimes in the same or different towns. Additionally, SSHC specifically names that they seek to use their skills and equity from their first property and house to create additional cooperatives in their local housing market to the point that they would effectively overpower for-profit developers and landlords in the marketplace, thereby shifting control of the community's housing and its regulation to the people who live in the housing and community everyday. In other words, SSHC seeks to create a housing commons in their area, in which all property is held in common and stewarded by those using it at any given time. This commons-building strategy hinges upon the cooperative's common equity model, in which all assets are collectively owned, which protects them from being demutualized, i.e. distributed or sold.

Homo Cooperativus

Just as the Cooperative Identity is not just a structural checklist, being a cooperative person goes much deeper than being a dues-paying member of a cooperative enterprise. A cooperative individual is someone with emotional intelligence, self-confidence, social skills, and capacities to foster strong interpersonal relationships. If these kinds of emotional and relational skills were present in more of society, explicit cooperative values and training might not be necessary. Red Root (Worker, Philippines) trains and educates their members in issues of mental health, which they feel allows them to be better teammates and to be a stronger cooperative. By valuing the holistic wellbeing of their members, as well as understanding how mental illness functions and how mental health can fluctuate for a variety of factors, they are able to support each other in their wholeness and complexities. This then facilitates each person to fully contribute and participate in the cooperative as their whole selves - which is especially important in a creative context; it rejects compartmentalization of personality or feeling guilty or ashamed for very common human experiences and conditions. Youth Cooperative Hub (MSC, South Africa) have regularly scheduled group dynamics and relational skillbuilding trainings for all members, as they feel the skills taught in those sessions underpin everything they do within and beyond their cooperatives. Albanyan CICS (User, Nigeria) explores topics about leadership, relationships, and personhood in their regular meetings that take the form of group conversations, often with an elder mentor present. Even when the cooperative does not have any conventional "business" to conduct, the membership still convenes to share time and space in order to sustain relationships and support on another - which is an integral part of their cooperative work. Woodcraft Folk (MSC, UK) educates children and youth in a variety of topics via their grassroots learning groups. A key intention behind their work with very young people is to impart and offer experiential application of cooperative values in a way that can shape a person's personality for the rest of their lives. Teaching children how to live out cooperativism is a very literal first-next-step in creating and sustaining a cooperative society.

SURVIVAL

The main way in which the survival of humanity is taken into account by those coopyouth interviewed is via the priorities and guidelines each of their cooperatives has developed to guide its selection of activities, partners, and materials. Red Root (Worker, Philippines) states that all projects they take on as contract work must benefit humanity. They will sometimes take on government contracts, despite some of the harmful practices of the current regime, because they feel confident those projects have potential to be accomplished in a way that benefits people much more than it contributes to harmful systems; in fact, their conception is akin to reducing harm, as they know if another group took on the contract, they might impart non-cooperative values or practices through the work. As partially outlined above, three of the cooperatives interviewed - Knowledge Worker (Worker, Denmark), Green Campus Cooperative (MSC, Canada), and Vio.me (Worker, Greece) –

demonstrate an explicit commitment to ecologically sustainable work. Green Campus Cooperative works in the area of textiles and garments, a historically ecologically exploitative industry, and Vio.me manufactures ecologically sustainable cleaning products. Both cooperatives mandate exclusive engagement with cooperative and fair trade chains, as well as only sourcing products that are organic or otherwise sustainably created. Knowledge Worker only takes on projects that align with their views on sustainability (e.g. developing a carsharing cooperative). The overarching guiding principle for all of these coopyouth is that of intentional participation with values-aligned actors and explicit non-participation with suppliers, distributors or others that prop up the economic, political, and social systems that are harming humanity and the earth.

Legality is Not Morality

Ventanilla (Worker, Mexico) was faced with a conundrum following a hurricane that decimated the mangroves in their community watershed. Government regulations following the disaster dictated that no mangroves could be planted until a formal process had been evolved. Six years passed by the time such a process was successfully legislated. Ventanilla knew that, if they waited out the government's bureaucracy, the watershed and their community would be lost. Their priorities were the life and wellbeing in their community; they struggled with the dissonance between legality and morality, given that the legal route ensured death and destruction. The survival of humanity is more important than respecting governmental bureaucracy, just as legality is not morality.

Healing & Repair

In order for an organism to survive an injury, logically, they must experience healing and repair of that harm; the same is true for systemic harms that have occured and persisted through the history of humanity. The topic of healing as a prerequisite for social transformation is a common thread among the coopyouth statements referenced and outlined in the "How We Got Here" section. During the 1995 Congress of the Alliance, Ian MacPherson publicly acknowledged that many of the cooperative legacies throughout the world are rooted in colonization and imperialism, broad-scale systemic harms that reverberate still today. It is imperative to address these histories and to rectify harms as much as possible if the Cooperative Movement is to be successful in creating an economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable society. Repaired Nations (MSC, United States) speaks to the necessity of repairing those harmed by colonization, particularly African people who were violently enslaved and trafficked away from their lands and people. Repaired Nations views cooperative development as a method of self-help and self-responsibility, both cooperative values, to repair communities which have suffered enduring harms. This empowered orientation towards repair can be both embraced and supported by the Cooperative Movement at large, specifically via the practice of reparations, by giving Repaired Nations and other cooperative memberships negatively impacted by colonization and imperialism. More pragmatic applications of the ethics of repair and reparations are discussed in more detail in the key issue section on "Capital."

Correlated Issues

Some of the key issues that often correlate, coincide, or are caused by the elements of "Social Transformation" in a cooperative are as follows -

COOPERATIVE CULTURE

The ultimate goals and daily priorities of a cooperative are incredibly different between those committed to social transformation and those simply conducting cooperative “business.” Understanding one’s daily cooperative work as part of a global social movement, which trends towards broad-scale societal transformation, adds weight and importance to the work of cooperatives. It also enhances the contributions of each person, which helps to contribute to a heightened sense of self-worth and personal power. Social transformation answers the “why” for cooperators within cooperative work, and people striving together with a “why” of to “transform society” creates a markedly different culture than people simply working together in a slightly more ethical than average business.

RELATIONSHIPS OF SOLIDARITY

With a social transformation mentality and the expansive solidarity it implies, the number or kind of potential allies are many more beyond a conventional interpretation of the 6th and 7th Principles. It includes those in established and active cooperative communities, as well as l those implicitly practicing cooperativism. Examples of implicit cooperatism include all people broadly striving towards social justice and collective liberation, such as those pursuing environmental, racial, and gender justice. The social transformation interpretation of “Cooperation Among Cooperatives” and “Care for Community” encompasses concern for and solidarity with the earth and all its relatives - human and non-human, alike.

RELATIONSHIPS OF COERCION

After openly acknowledging foes to cooperativism, a key element of a movement orientation towards social transformation, the next step is to take action to resist or abolish them. The most pragmatic, first-next-step is to live the ethic of “non-participation” engaged throughout this toolkit. Simply not participating in relationships that are coercive and thereby perpetuate inequalities and other forms of harm, is one step closer towards a transformed, cooperative society. By focusing resources and attention on those relationships and systems of solidarity and drawing resources and attention away from those of coercion, it is a way of both building and actively living in the cooperative world cooperativism seeks to create and sustain.

Conclusion: First-Next Step

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

This toolkit is a marker along a collective path of cooperative thought and practice; one made by youth at a pivotal time in world history, and one that is relevant to all generations of cooperators. While there is some inherent criticism of some of the steps and paths taken to date by previous generations in the toolkit, it honors the work and intentions of cooperators throughout the history of the movement. It is the responsibility of every generation to critically assess the state of cooperativism in the world, and, following, what role they are called to play in the evolution of cooperativism and human development. “Between the past, where our memories lie, and the future, where we keep our dreams, we must face the present, embracing the duties imposed on us by our circumstances. […] Having a sense of responsibility means no more and no less than considering oneself totally irreplaceable for the task with which one has been entrusted” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 30).

“YOU’LL UNDERSTAND WHEN YOU’RE OLDER”

The contemporary global CoopYouth Movement felt responsible for articulating its cooperative philosophy and practice via this toolkit, and, accordingly, it offers an exacting interpretation of the Cooperative Identity from the perspective of young people who have grown up amid increasing nation-state violence, astronomical wealth disparity, deadly health pandemics, and a global climate catastrophe. While the situations that shape the current coopyouth worldview is exceptionally dire, it is not new; previous generations were witness and party to the evolution of many of these ills over the past many decades. Some of those previous generations were told the same thing contemporary youth are consistently told when calling out these dangerous trajectories - that it’s “complicated,” that it’s “not that bad,” and they’ll “understand when they’re older.” “But at times, one gets to thinking that all these efforts to tell us that things are complex, and that we do not understand them, is a cover for a desire to leave the world the way it is” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 29).

WE UNDERSTAND NOW

We understand that situations are as dire as they seem. We understand the tendency to adopt positions of complicity in the face of frightening political and economic power or the opportunity to benefit from those same powers. We understand that it is overwhelming and, at times, seemingly futile to take any steps to address the challenges collectively being faced by humanity. This toolkit acknowledges and embraces the enormity of the human predicament in the 21st century, and then humbly offers specific next steps for youth and non-youth alike to take in moving in the direction of a possible future. These first-next steps include actions as seemingly miniscule as how best to foster leadership in your cooperative peers, as well as calls for broad scale change across the Cooperative Movement; such as the unconditional redistribution of wealth from the disproportionately resourced to the marginalized and disempowered (e.g. poor, youth, Global South). This toolkit also takes an important step - though not for the first time - of recentering critique in cooperative discourse, though in a manner that immediately provides solutions for how to address the circumstances. “Let us not brag of being mature and progressive people unless each and every one of us acts with due reflection and seriousness” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 30).

COOPSPRING AS THE FIRST FIRST-NEXT STEP

The “first-next step” concept was introduced in the “Words Mean Things'' sectionto orient cooperative practice as a humble first-next step in humanity’s striving towards a world free of coercion and oppression. This concluding invocation of the concept is to position this toolkit as the first-next step of the Cooperative Movement’s present moment, a moment that will very quickly be replaced by countless future moments. We urge cooperators in future moments to take their responsibility to perpetuate cooperative discourse seriously, to articulate the practice implied by their unique interpretation of cooperativism, and acknowledge this and past work by critiquing, amending, and improving it. “Cooperativism is not something we should live out as if what is accepted and settled at a given moment were unchangeable. Rather, we should be open to it as an experimental process in which modifications that contribute to updating the means can and should be adopted, while safeguarding the nobility and worthiness of the high ends being pursued” (Arizmendiarrieta, 1999, 56).

IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

One of the key contributions of coopyouth to cooperativism via this toolkit is a reminder of the importance of the individual. Interestingly, Millenials and Gen Z are generally often critiqued for being narcissistic and obsessed with self-image, particularly in the context of social media culture that harms young people by encouraging them to commodify themselves. However, the benefits of a more self-focused culture has been a return to understanding how important an individual’s health and happiness is to collective wellbeing. As cooperativism is a first-next step in humanity’s striving towards a better world, and this toolkit constitutes a first-next step of present day cooperative practice; a similar pattern is evident in the relationship between cooperative personhood and cooperative practice in community. The philosophy and practices shared in this toolkit, while focusing more directly on sharing first-next steps for cooperative enterprises, direct us to the ultimately more important and impactful practice of cooperative humanism. While cooperativism is a collective endeavor, the actual first-next step in every aspect of cooperative work is always individual. “Our own personal evolution and the evolution determined by everything around us, our relationships and coexistence with others, the degree of integrity, seriousness, responsibility, and initiative consolidated through organizational arrangements and experience itself, are new factors that can prompt us to once again review everything about the organization, to better serve the humanist goals we have set” (ibid, 56). Our individual striving to become more cooperative humans will always lead us into better relationship with others, which - in turn - supports our personal development, as well as that of society. Coopyouth assert the primacy of people by their focus on mental health, a rejection of professionalism, calls to empower the marginalized no matter the financial cost, alongside a range of other ethics and activities. “First people, then cooperatives” (ibid, 14).

FUTURE FIRST-NEXT STEPS

In order to sustain the lineage of coopyouth thought and practice into the future, young cooperative practitioners are encouraged to submit their own commentary on and examples of good cooperative practice to be incorporated into the toolkit. As such, *CoopSpring: A CoopYouth Toolkit* can continue to support and represent global coopyouth wisdom further along the collective path of cooperative development. Through this publication and work, the contemporary CoopYouth Movement endeavors to inspire a tradition of sustained discourse on cooperative philosophy and practice internationally among youth and non-youth alike. It is through critique, discussion, and skill sharing that cooperators refine and progress cooperativism. Such reflection is absolutely essential to the integrity and sustainability of a global social movement endeavoring to eradicate poverty, eliminate oppression, and build a better world.

Appendix

CONTENTS

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Note from Artist

My name is AEBL from TAIPEI city. I love my life and shout out to my crews 8+9 TWB AXS MD 2G 1080. Thanks for this opportunity to put my hands in the book.

Note from Author

I'm Emily Alice, born and raised in the heartland of the United States, where my first job as a kid was working in the fields for Monsanto. Since then, I've lived in 7 different states, 3 different countries, and 15 different cities. I started doing cooperative work as a university student, and spent the next 15 years in the housing, worker, and development sectors. Throughout my work, I have been committed to youth organizing within the Cooperative Movement, especially on the national and international levels. I was a co-author of every CoopYouth Statement outlined in this toolkit, with the exception of the final formal governance resolution. As the global CoopYouth Movement has grown, so have I; my understanding of cooperativism has evolved largely through the support of my peers. Most of that evolution involved unlearning things I had accepted as truth, and finding concepts and terms from other movements to help put better names to what we were doing. This toolkit represents the voices and perspectives I heard in countless conversations with coopyouth at conferences, on conference calls, via email and text, and during the course of the interviews for this toolkit. While, at times, discussions would reveal that individuals preferred one political moniker over another, the core values and visions were, by and large, the same.

I've struggled with my identity as a "Cooperatrix" in recent years, as many of my youth peers have left cooperative work - often disenchanted by a movement they felt did not share their cooperative values, and/or unable to access the resources they needed to be successful. Contributing this toolkit is a hopeful attempt at articulating the interpretation of cooperativism that has shaped me and all the coopyouth spaces I have been in through the years, in order to validate and support young people - who came and are coming to cooperation for the same reasons my peers and I did - to stay. So many young people have worked so hard over the last two decades to create a CoopYouth Movement with a strong identity, coherent philosophy, and organizational homes; because the movement that already existed did not adequately meet our needs or reflect our dreams. The growth of our movement runs parallel to and is informed by the youth-led uprisings and organizing around the world this century that has loudly and consistently asserted that wealth disparity, nation-state violence, and climate catastrophe is not what we want, that things have gone too far. At times, the disconnect between the world we imagine via our values and the world we we live in is so expansive that it is hard to know what to do next.

The greatest thing this toolkit contributes is its demonstration of specific ways in which coopyouth values, often dismissed as overly idealistic or naive, can be expressed in practice - even in the tiniest of ways. Every step counts. It is my sincere hope that the world and the Cooperative Movement, at-large, will embrace and take heed of the wisdom this generation is contributing, and that this generation of coopyouth, even as we grow older, never stops striving towards a better world. "The greatest challenge confronting cooperatives did not come from the outside world. As in the past (and as it will be in the future), the most serious threat was not the competition. It was not even the altered political order. It was in the hearts of discouraged cooperators. It was a matter of resolve, an uncertainty as to what the movement could offer the contemporary world" (MacPherson, 1998, 230-231).

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Note from Editor

If there is to be a “cooperative movement” at all, then young people – with our idealism, our drive, and our imagination – must be at its center. While many movements appeal to young people organically, *successful* movements must prioritize tangible support, resources, mentorship and structure specifically to youth. Movements like ours must remember that young people must be centered in our work in part because, as people marginalized from positions of power, they are uniquely situated to benefit from cooperative structures while simultaneously growing into roles of organic leadership. If the cooperative movement fails to offer a path to building youth power in our ranks, young people will look elsewhere for inclusion – at our own movement’s peril.

This toolkit offers urgent insight into the issues and challenges that coopyouth face across the globe while underlining tangible methods and practices that are replicable everywhere. And Lippold Cheney is exactly the kind of organic leader and organizer our movement desperately needs to compile these resources because of her proven ability to troubleshoot and organize alongside cooperative youth. Perhaps even more saliently, Lippold Cheney is unwilling to shy away from the hard conversations and conclusions that collectively illustrate where cooperative institutions have failed to support young people’s participation in the movement, and how we might imagine transformative alternatives commensurate with our movement’s inherent radicalism.

This resource will be a gift to cooperativists who are young, young-at-heart, or who understand that the inclusion of – and eminent respect for – young people is a prerequisite for the real cooperative movement our people and planet so desperately need.

Jeffy Noven

USA

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Coming soon...