



Co-operACTION

Toolkit for Young Co-operators



IFM • SEI



Editing and proof-reading

Christine Sudbrock, Bine Troitzsch and Estel Buch Mundó

Graphic design and layout

Carlos Guerrero Pinto

Contributors

Akash Shah, Amina Lehner, Arnold Kamden, Carly Walker-Dawson, Christine Sudbrock, Coumba Ba, Diana Andrea Robledo Varas, Dominik Eisner, Emily Cross, Emma Grzechnik Mork, Estel Buch Mundó, Ieva Sestilovska, Joel Nasvall, Julie Thorpe, Katri Paatero, Khady Badji, Laura Sukarov, Lillian Gerber, Luz Karime Falla Ramirez, Maria Tuvelius, Mary Menengu Ntui, Mery Nelba Mancipe Lara, Milind Jori, Omawah Oyebo Elenor Charlette, Pablo Fuentes Astudillo, Patriche Benticke, Pauliina Virtanen, Purva Kopardekar, Rafael Sarmiento Acevedo, Renars Treimanis, Salimata Traore, Samuel Sarpong, Sergio Olave Rivera, Signe Urkauskas, Soili Sirenne, Tashangang Anastasia Nsemue, Terhi Ljungkvist, Thiane Scarlet de Los Angeles Gallardo Fontz, Una Urkauskas, Victoria Bull

Illustrations

Page 7: Polyp (www.polyp.org.uk)

Bee: Manuel Perez Díaz (Co-operative College, UK)



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www.ifm-sei.org

International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International
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1050 Brussels

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Introduction

Who are we?

The International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International is an international educational movement working to empower children and young people to take an active role in changing society for the better and fight for their rights. We are an umbrella organisation for sixty child and youth-led movements all over the world, educating on the basis of our values of equality, democracy, peace, co-operation and friendship.



Children's rights

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is a key document for IFM-SEI. Through our member organisations and the activities of our international, we aim to ensure that children and young people are well informed about their rights and are empowered to ensure they are respected. To reach this goal, we organise a variety of activities including seminars, training courses, international camps and conferences. Our work is based on peer education: We believe that young people have as much to teach as they have to learn.

By children and young people, for children and young people

Children and young people are involved in all levels of decision-making in our movements, from their local groups to the world congress. It is our firm belief that children are competent to make decisions and have strong opinions on global issues as well as matters directly affecting them. They only need the empowerment to feel that their voices will be heard in society.

This handbook is one of the results of IFM-SEI's Co-operACTION project. Through Co-operACTION we promote the co-operative model of enterprise to young people at risk of unemployment through education, exchange and practical experience of setting up co-operative enterprises in 11 local communities.

Youth groups from Falcon organisations in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe learned about the values and principles of co-operatives, developed their own business ideas and set up small youth co-operatives that are now up and running in their communities.

Some of the co-operatives set up in the framework of Co-operACTION aim to generate more income for children and youth-led organisations, others can even provide first employment for members of our movements, and all are a very effective learning opportunity about youth entrepreneurship that is not based on an individualistic strive for wealth, but on the needs of a community and a participatory and democratic effort to satisfy these needs.

The business ideas that the groups came up with are very varied and reflect the different realities the young people live in and the different skills they have. The co-operative of Liepajas Jaunie Vanagi in Latvia, for example, organises birthday parties for children, the participants from Antar Bharati India sell handmade bags and offer computer courses. Manque Chile brings tourism into a remote village, Acacia Colombia offers catering services using vegetables from the organisation's own new wall garden.

While we still think that it is the responsibility of governments to take action against youth unemployment, we also want to show young people that another world is already possible. Our economic system does not need to be based on competition and exploitation. On the contrary, through co-operation and fair trade real needs of the people can be better satisfied and no one is left behind.





Co-operatives are an example of fair and social business and something that people can start on their own, without waiting for governments to act.

Our movement has a lot in common with co-operatives. Most youth organisations in general, and surely all member organisations of IFM-SEI share the values of the co-operative movement. Children who grow up in our groups soon become experts in self-help and self-responsibility of everyone in a group. They experience solidarity and democracy day to day within our movements and are convinced that everyone must have equal rights, no matter where they come from, how much money they have, how they look or who they love.

We hope that this publication will encourage and help you to go through a similar learning process with your group.



How to use this publication

We wrote this publication particularly for youth leaders who want to support groups in setting up a co-operative. However, you can use the materials you find in here also as an individual, as food for thought and inspiration, or as a teacher.

The structure of the publication follows the different steps a group should take when setting up a co-operative:

- Introducing the concept of co-operation
- Generating business ideas
- Getting organised within the co-operative
- Doing business
- Checking back with the members

In every section you will find inspiration from our young co-operators, followed by educational activities to use in your groups or to go through on your own. You can use the activities during weekly group meetings, on camps or on seminars, as an experienced group leader, a peer educator or someone who is running a workshop for the first time. One thing you should know is that all the activity plans are just proposals; you should always adapt them to your group. Some groups are more experienced than others, some will need more time and some will get more into the activity, others not. Don't take our proposals as they are, but adapt them for your group and for your setting to get the best results from the Co-operACTION toolkit.



The Power of Co-operation

Survival of the fittest – is that really how society develops best? Can people only be successful if they are in competition to each other and place their interests over others?

In IFM-SEI, we don't think that just the fittest should and will survive. If people look after each other, work together and develop ideas in the spirit of solidarity, only then will society develop in a positive way.

Darwin didn't show the whole picture when he said that nature proves the idea of 'survival of the fittest'. There are many examples in nature that show the opposite: often only co-operation ensures survival. The 'Volvox' for example is an algae that is made up of thousands of smaller cells that work together so that they are too big to be eaten.

In winter months, birds create huge formations to migrate to warmer places. Often even different kinds of birds group together and fly in a way that helps them to support each other and be protected against enemies.

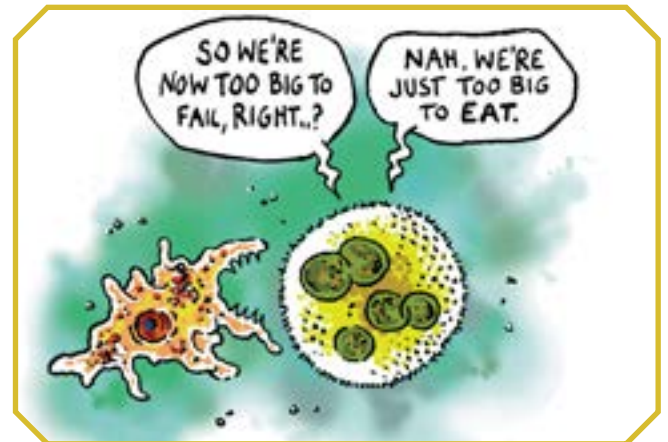
Honey bees are another great example. They work together to construct the hive where 50,000 bees all have roles foraging for food, cleaning, guarding, and looking after the queen and the young.

The forager bees communicate through the 'waggle dance' – a series of movements through which they describe to other bees the exact location of food sources – a bit of a contradiction to the survival of the fittest idea.

Of course co-operation is not just powerful because it guarantees survival of some species of animals. Co-operation is powerful because we can create better things when we work together and learn from each other. And it is powerful because it is fair. When we co-operate, we don't leave anyone behind. In co-operation, everyone contributes in whatever way they can, and everyone gets a fair share of the profit.

Co-operation is the basis of IFM-SEI and its member organisations. We work in children's and youth groups that are based on equality and solidarity, we learn from each other and we work together to reach our common goal: to create social change.

Understanding the concept of co-operation is easy. But what about co-operatives? *Read on to find out more!*





What are Co-operatives?

Co-operatives are businesses that provide goods and services. In this way, they are similar to traditional enterprises. They might sell things in shops, offer services to customers, possibly make a small profit, employ people and much more that resembles any other kind of business.

What makes co-operatives different?

The difference lies in a set of values and principles that all co-operatives share, and in the purpose of the business. The main purpose of private enterprises is to make money for the owner or those who have invested in the company. Public enterprises want to provide services for the public, like building roads or collecting waste. The main purpose of co-operatives is to serve the needs of its members.

All members can participate in the decision-making of the co-operative, no matter how much they can contribute to the business. This is different to private businesses, where the influence of investors depends on the amount of money they invested in the business. In public enterprises, governments or local councils take decisions. In co-operatives, workers, who know best how to organise their enterprise, and consumers, who know best what they need, decide on what the co-operative is doing. This is one of the ways how co-operatives ensure that people come before profit.

According to the International Co-operative Alliance, a co-operative is an *autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise*.

Co-operatives are also a good way for small producers to become stronger through working together. If for example small farmers set up a co-operative to sell their goods together, they will increase their bargaining power with clients and suppliers and can share resources, for example tools that they don't need every day or facilities to process their goods.

Kaki Langit Co-operative

When the organisation KKSP asked their members if they would be interested in setting up a social enterprise, the group was immediately tempted. Many of them earn money by 'busking': playing music at traffic lights and asking the people waiting in the cars for money. This is far from being a regular and reliable income, so a chance for something more sustainable made everyone excited.

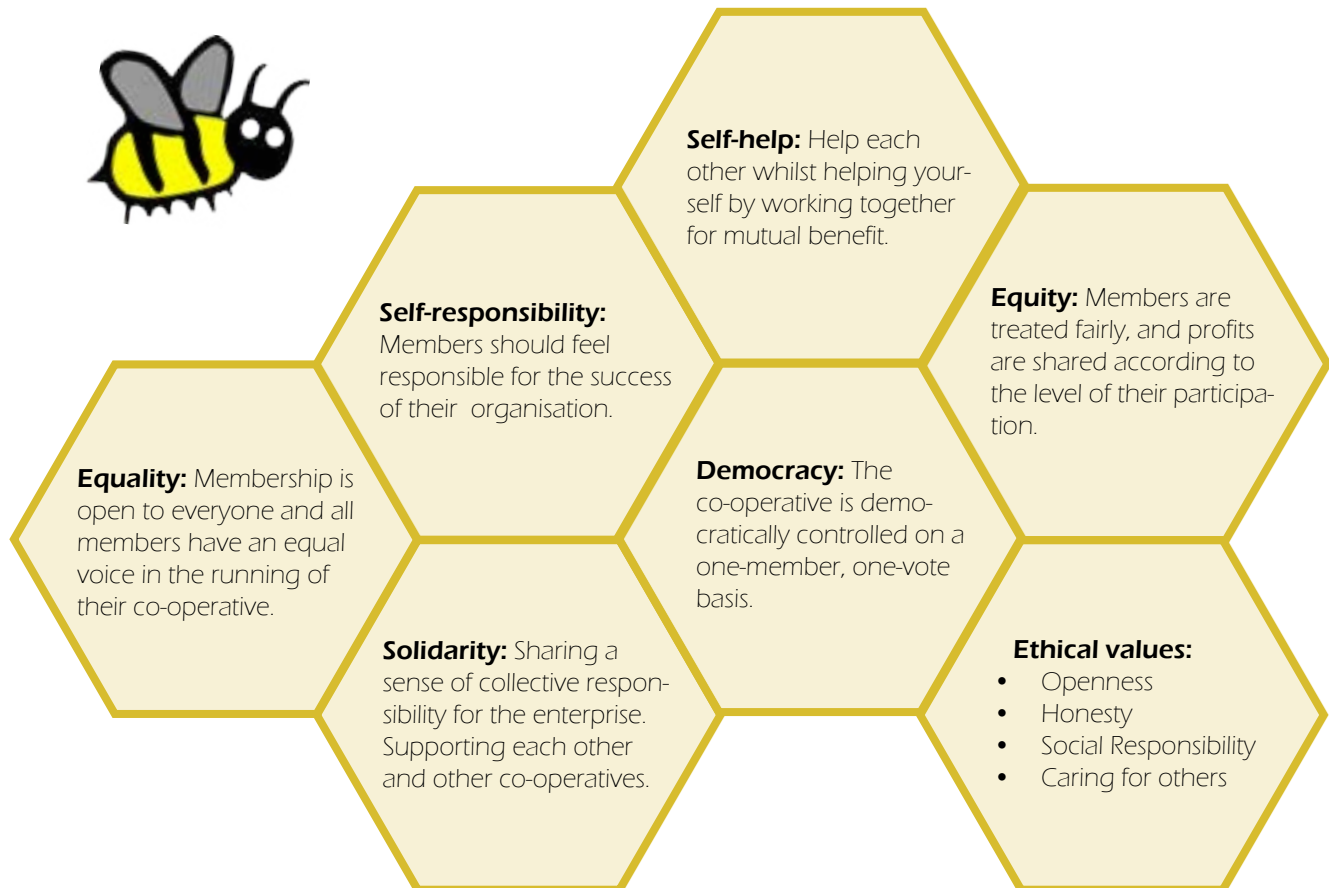
The group decided to work on something related to KKSP's work areas: outdoor education. Through outdoor activity, people develop responsibility, courage and team work, things that are also important in the co-operative movement. All members have been at many camps and hikes together with KKSP and know how to maintain tents and other equipment. So their new co-operative 'Kaki Langit' (in English: horizon) will sell and rent outdoor activity equipment and offer training for its members. All members of KKSP committed to use the services of Kaki Langit for all their outdoor activities. The services are also open for non-members who can order through an online form.





The Power of Co-operation

Co-operatives follow a set of common values:



Co-operatives work according to these principles:

1. **Voluntary and open membership:** Co-operatives are voluntary organisations open to everyone willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without discrimination. Some co-operatives are owned only by their workers, others by the consumers or both.
2. **Democratic member control:** All members have an equal voice and a right to participate in decisions and policy making. Officials and elected representatives are accountable to the members.
3. **Member economic participation:** The capital of a co-operative is controlled democratically by its members and for their benefit. The members approve how the money of the co-operative is spent. Members can also pay a membership fee and then receive a small part of the profit depending on the amount of their fee.
4. **Autonomy and independence:** Co-operatives should always be controlled by their members, even when they enter into agreements with the government and other organisations.
5. **Education, training and information:** Co-operatives are committed to the development of their members, representatives and staff in order to make the co-operative effective. They inform the public and young people about the benefits of co-operation.
6. **Cooperation among co-operatives:** Co-operatives work together at local, regional, national and international levels to achieve their aims.
7. **Concern for the community:** Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.



History of Co-operatives

Co-operatives become more popular in times of economic crises, when people realise that traditional forms of business do not benefit society. However, co-operatives are not new. The modern co-operative movement started over 160 years ago in 1844, when a group of 28 working people in the wool and cotton weaving town of Rochdale (UK) developed a new model of co-operative society, learning from the successes and failures in earlier co-operatives. The Rochdale model quickly spread across the country.

The Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society was set up at a time of great unemployment and poverty. The Rochdale Pioneers wanted to open a shop to sell good quality foods that were not adulterated or unfairly measured. Many private shopkeepers at the time added plaster of Paris to flour, gravel to oatmeal, tree leaves to tea, etc. and weighted the scales in their own favour. Food adulteration was so common that the Rochdale Pioneers opened their own flour mill so they could control the quality even further, and they educated the members about what wholesome unadulterated flour was like.



The 28 founder members of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society saved together, raising 28 pounds to set up their shop. It was open two evenings a week at first, run by the members after they had finished their normal working day. The Pioneers were committed to running their co-operative in a democratic way. Each member had one share and one vote, so every member had equal say in the decisions made in the business.

As the Pioneers did not have much money to start the store, at first they only sold butter, sugar, flour and oatmeal, the four foods that everyone needed. Gradually they added products to the list, extending the opening hours and employing a shopkeeper. Within a few years they started selling cloths and other non-food items. The profits generated by the business were shared among the members in proportion to the amount they spent in the store.



The Rochdale Pioneers viewed the opening of their store as the first step in improving the conditions of their families and the whole community. Their aims in 1844 included providing good quality housing for members and having co-operative farms and factories. Within a few years, they opened a library and began to hold education courses, giving the opportunity for members and their families to learn about the sciences, the arts and to learn languages like French and German.

Although there had been co-operatives before the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society, it was this one that was a real success and which became the example that other co-operators followed. The Pioneers wrote down their democratic principles which are still the basis of co-operatives around the world today.

*** This story is taken from the Young co-operatives Action Kit of the Co-operative College, UK**.*



The Power of Co-operation

You want to find out about other co-operatives of our time? Here are some examples:

FC United (<http://www.fc-utd.co.uk/>)

FC United in Manchester is a community football club owned and democratically run by its 1974 members. It seeks to change the way football is owned and run, putting supporters at the heart of everything.



Footprint (<http://www.footprinters.co.uk/>)

Footprint is a printer workers co-operative, which means the business is owned by the workers. They print booklets, leaflets, stickers, newsletters, etc. They try to operate as ethically as they can, printing on recycled papers, powered by a genuine green electricity tariff and using the least environmentally damaging processes they can find.



The handmade bakery (<http://www.thehandmade-bakery.coop/>)

The handmade bakery is a community-supported artisan bakery operating as a workers co-operative. It produces traditionally crafted bread that is slow fermented, ethical, uses organic and local ingredients and is healthy with no improvers or preservatives.



Coffee grower cooperative Manizales (www.cooperativamanizales.com)

The *cooperativa de caficultores de Manizales* is a group of small and medium-sized coffee growers in the Colombian coffee region working together to process and sell their coffee. They have fairtrade registration and offer their members a wide range of services that they can finance from the fairtrade premium, for example veterinary check-ups for the farm animals, sharing tools, training courses and a lot more.



We chose these examples because the websites are in English or Spanish and the IFM-SEI Co-operation group visited all of them during their training courses. There are many more examples, check in your own community if you can find some and visit them.

Co-operatives and Fair Trade

Concern for the Community is one of the seven co-operative principles; it means not only the local community where the co-operative is based, but also other communities that can be affected by the actions of the enterprise. In this regard, Fair Trade plays a crucial role in the work of co-operatives.

Fair Trade was developed in an attempt to counter the inequality of world trade. The certification of goods as fairtrade ensures producers and exporters are given a fair price for their goods as well as ensuring higher social and environmental standards. The standards include banning child and slave labour, guaranteeing a safe workspace, the right to unionise and an investment in social and environmental protection and development.

Small producer organisations form co-operatives to sell fairtrade certified goods. They take all decisions in their co-operative democratically and share the profit fairly between them. So Fair Trade is important because it enables producer organisations to work together and decide how to improve their communities themselves. Their organisation will have managers like any other, they may well collaborate with the local government in improving the community, but the crucial thing is they have elected representatives who are there to make decisions that meet their members' needs as much as possible.

Fair Trade is growing globally, more and more consumers are consciously making the decision to buy Fair Trade goods but it is still only a small slice of the overall world trade "cake". What is needed is a complete change in understanding – unfair trade should not be possible – there should be no trade other than Fair Trade!



Size isn't everything, but...

The **International Co-operative Alliance** represents close to one billion individual members. The global representative body for co-operatives is one of the largest non-governmental organisations in the world.

The country with the largest number of individual members is the **United States** with 305.6 million members. There are nearly 30,000 co-operatives in the US. The next countries are in Asia: **China** - 160.8 million members; **India** - 97.6 million members; **Japan** - 75.8 million members; **Indonesia** - 40.6 million members.

In **France**, 21,000 co-operatives provide over 1 million jobs representing 3.5% of the active working population.

In **Kenya**, 63% of the population derive their livelihoods from co-operatives. Approximately 250,000 Kenyans are employed or gain most of their income from co-operatives.

In **Colombia**, the co-operative movement provides 137,888 jobs through direct employment and an additional 559,118 jobs as worker-owners in workers co-operatives - providing 3.65% of all jobs in the country.

In **Denmark**, in 2007 consumer co-operatives held 36.4% of the consumer retail market.

In **Japan**, the agricultural co-operatives report outputs of USD 90 billion with 91% of all Japanese farmers in membership. In 2007 consumer co-operatives reported a total turnover of USD 34.048 billion with 5.9% of the food market share.

In **Mauritius**, in the agricultural sector, co-operators play an important role in the production of sugar, vegetable, fruit, flowers, milk, meat and fish. Nearly 50% of sugar-cane planters are grouped in co-operatives.

In **Canada**, four of every ten Canadians are members of at least one co-operative. In Quebec, approximately 70% of the population are co-op members, while in Saskatchewan 56% are members.

In **Malaysia**, 6.78 million people or 27% of the total population are members of co-operatives.

In **Norway** out of a population of 4.8 million people, 2 million are members of co-operatives.

Source: *International Co-operative Alliance – Co-operative facts and figures* (<http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-facts-figures/>)





The Power of Co-operation

PinPoint

The participants from Woodcraft Folk decided to stick with what they know best: youth work. The PinPoint workers co-operative will bring Woodcraft Folk groups and youth services such as mentoring to East London. Here's what they told us after the Co-operACTION event:

"PinPoint's experience at the event in a word was 'amazing!' We as a co-op and individuals took a lot away from that week that will benefit us in so many areas. We left Manchester with a much clearer idea of what would work best for our co-op, and thankfully, the rest of our co-op agreed! Our plan for the next few months is to get our first project, the Woodcraft Folk group for 10-12 year olds up and running and running effectively. This means continuing to attend various Woodcraft Folk training events as well as maintaining the good links we've started to make with young people, parents, the other Woodcraft groups currently running within the district, local services and key people within the borough. Through the support available to us through Co-operatives UK, we also plan to go through the processes that will make PinPoint officially a co-operative".



Selling food in Senegal



The children's rights organisation Action Enfance Senegal runs an associative school for disadvantaged children in a suburb of Dakar. The school is always in need of financial resources, so the Action Enfance volunteers decided to set up a co-operative to raise funds and at the same time support local farmers, offer employment for a few of them in the long run and learn about healthy nutrition.

They buy fruits and vegetables from the farmers to produce delicious juices and other snacks that they sell at the local market, at festivities in the community and at gatherings of the school staff. At the moment, the co-operative has 40 members and a management committee of four young people. Every member helps producing and selling juices and snacks, everyone depending on their capabilities, interests and availability.

Their dream is to open a real shop where they can store more food and sell every day. They already organised a room for it, and just need to earn a bit more money to be able to renovate it.



Introducing Co-operation

- **Introducing Co-operation**
- Finding Ideas
- Getting Organised
- Doing Business
- Checking Back

From this chapter on, we will take you through an easy step-by-step guide on how to set up your own co-operative. You can follow the different phases in which you will find activities that will help you and your group to work on your idea, the governance structure of your co-op, your business plan and other important aspects.

First you have to explore co-operation, what a co-operative actually is, their values and principles and how these are applied in the running of an enterprise.

The following part proposes activities that will help you to explore the co-operative values and principles..



Useful introduction resources about co-operation and co-operatives:

- The Co-operative College (Manchester, UK): <http://www.co-op.ac.uk/>
- Co-opVille role game to experience being a co-operator: <http://www.youngco-operatives.coop/Resources/Co-opville-download>
- Young Co-operatives Action Kit to start up your own co-operative: <http://www.youngco-operatives.coop/Starting-Up/Action-Kit>
- International Co-operative Alliance: <http://ica.coop/>
- Co-operatives Europe: <http://www.coopseurope.coop/>
- The co-operative Revolution – A graphic novel: <http://www.co-operative.coop/graphic-novel/play/>



Energizers

Before going more into detail we propose you some energising activities to start with. Energizers are quick activities to put energy back into a group or warm-up in the morning. You can run them before every session or in the middle of a session if energy is low.

4-Up

Everyone sits in a circle. Four people are asked to stand. They are only allowed to remain standing for ten seconds, although they may sit down sooner if they wish. As soon as one of the four sits down, somebody else in the circle must stand up to replace them: again, only for a maximum of ten seconds. The groups must make sure that no less and no more than four people are standing at the same time.

Group Juggle

Everyone stands in a circle. You start passing a ball to each other saying the name of the person you are passing the ball to. You have to remember from whom you received the ball and to whom you passed it. Everyone should get the ball once (the last person throws it to the first). Once the circle is closed, start again with the same order and keep on passing the ball. Add new balls of different sizes to the circle, always respecting the same order. Try to get every round, lots of balls should fly in the circle at the same time.

Pillow Race

Everyone sits in a circle. Every second person in the circle belongs to the same team. You have two pillows, one per team. At a signal, you start passing the pillow to your team members (every second person in the circle). If one pillow overtake the pillow of the other group, the faster group has won.

Human Machine

The aim of the game is to build a human machine. One person starts by making a noise and movement and repeating this over and over. One after the other all participants will join with a new movement and noise until everyone in the group is making up a loud and powerful machine.





Introducing Co-operation

The Boogie-boogie Dance

In a circle, start sing the song below together while walking to the right side.

After the first "Eeh Boogie-boogie, eh!" keep on singing, but now walk to the left side.

Then stop to make the movements: clap your hands, put your hands inside [the circle], put your hands outside [the circle], twist, dance, clap, etc.

Then start singing and walking again to the right, and then to the left.

Every verse change the part of the body to be moved: hand, foot, tongue, head, bottom, belly, and end up with the whole body. The song should speed up every time you start again.

Eeh Boogie-boogie, eh!

Eeh Boogie-boogie, eh!

And now we clap our hands!

Put your hand inside

Put your hand outside

Put your hand inside

And twist it now.

We dance the boogie-boogie and we all twist now.

And again we clap our hands!

Eeh Boogie-boogie, eh!

Eeh Boogie-boogie, eh!

And now we clap our hands!

Put your head inside

Put your head outside

Put your head inside

And twist it now.

We dance the boogie-boogie and we all twist now.

And again, we clap our hands!

Eeh Boogie-boogie, eh!

Eeh Boogie-boogie, eh!

...





Self-responsibility: Moving Forward

Age: 8+
Group Size: 8-15 (or in several groups)
Time: 20 minutes

Objectives

- To explore self-responsibility in a co-operative task
- To be conscious of one's own role in a group

Step-by-step instructions

1. Mark two lines with a distance of approximately 5 meters.
2. Ask participants to line up in one row behind one of the lines. Their feet must touch the feet of the 2 people standing next to them.
3. Explain that it is their task to reach the other line. The only condition is that they can never lose touch with the feet of the people next to them.
4. If anyone is not touching the feet of their neighbours anymore, they have to go back to the starting line.

Debriefing

- What did you do?
- Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- How did you communicate during the exercise?

Self-responsibility: Helium Stick

Age: 8+
Group Size: 8-10
Time: 20 minutes

Objectives

- To explore self-responsibility in a co-operative task
- To be conscious of one's own role in a group

Materials

- A light weight stick (e.g. bamboo garden cane), approximately one meter long

Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask participants to line up in two rows facing each other and to hold out their arms and index fingers.
2. Place the stick on their fingers. Get the group to adjust their fingers until the stick is horizontal and everyone's index fingers are touching the stick.
3. Explain that the challenge is to lower the stick to the ground, while everyone's fingers are in contact with the stick at all times. Pinching or grabbing the stick is not allowed – it must always rest on top of the fingers. If anyone is not touching the stick anymore, the task will be restarted.

Debriefing

- What did you do?
- Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- Who was responsible for bringing the stick down?
- How did you communicate during the exercise?



Solidarity: Lap Sit

Age: 8+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 20 minutes

Objectives

- To experience solidarity in a co-operative task
- To be conscious of one's own role in a group

Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask the group to arrange themselves in a circle with someone of roughly the same size on either side of them.
2. Ask everyone to turn to their right and step in closer to the centre, then put their hands on the waist of the person in front of them.
3. On the count of three, everyone should very slowly sit on the knees of the person behind them, keeping their own knees together as they do. They should concentrate on guiding the person in front of them to sit comfortably on their knees, and trust that the person behind them will guide them, too. First do a trial run.
4. Ask everyone to bend down, touch bottoms to knees and come right back up to make sure they are all standing closely enough together.
5. Now do the same thing but everyone sits on the knees of the person behind them and then clap their hands.
6. If the group can sit successfully without collapsing they can try walking in this position, too.

Debriefing

- How did you like the activity?
- Was it easy or difficult? Why?
- What did you do?





Equity: Lucky Number

Age: 8+
Group Size: 4 or more
Time: 20 minutes

Objective

- To introduce the meaning of equity

Materials

- A dice
- A pack of playing cards
- Pens
- Papers
- A small prize

Step-by-step instructions

1. Each person in turns rolls the dice. The facilitator gives them the number of playing cards from the pack equal to the number on the dice rolled.
2. Play this for a few rounds, until you can see a clear difference in how many cards the participants have.
3. Ask the players to count how many cards they have.
4. The player with the highest score wins a prize.

Debriefing

- How do you feel now?
- Is this game fair? Why (not)?
- Are there things in real life that work just like this game? How?
- How could you make the game fairer?
- How could the unfair things in real life be made fairer?





Self-help: Co-operative Arm Wrestling

Age: 8+
Group Size: 2 or more
Time: 20 minutes

Objective

- To introduce the meaning of self-help

Materials

- Pieces of chocolate (approximately 2 per person)
- Tables

Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask the participants to form pairs. Each pair should sit opposite of each other at a table to do arm wrestling: Put one elbow on the table, hold hands and try to push the forearm of the other person down on the table while not moving the elbow.
2. Every time someone manages to push the other's arm down, they receive a piece of chocolate.
3. Let them play for a few minutes and then stop.

Debriefing

- What did you do?
- How did you try to get more chocolate?
- Did you realise that you will get more chocolate if you co-operate? How long did it take you to realise this?
- Does something like this also happen in real life?
- Where/when would it be better to co-operate to help ourselves?





Equality: Where do we Belong?

Age: 8+
Group Size: 8 or more
Time: 30 minutes

Objective

- To reflect on the meaning of equality

Materials

- Stickers with different shapes and colours

Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask participants to close their eyes then put a sticker on each person's forehead. Make sure that some people have unique stickers or in a colour or shape that just a few other people share. Other stickers should be more widely distributed.
2. Explain that it is not allowed to speak during the exercise.
3. Ask participants to open their eyes and to 'group themselves'. Don't give more information, it is up to the group to organise themselves.
4. Wait until the group makes a final decision on how to group themselves. Ask questions such as:
 - Is everyone comfortable?
 - Are you sure that this is your final choice?
5. When the group has decided that they are done, ask them to explain how they grouped themselves and why.

Debriefing

- How do you feel being grouped like that?
- Why did you group yourselves like you did?
- Could you have grouped differently? Would it change the result? Would it change how you feel now?
- Could we find a way to group in which everyone would be included?

Help the group to reflect on the value of equality and how we can live this value when we work in different groups with very different people.





Democracy: Take a Stand

Age: 10+
Group Size: 8 or more
Time: 30 minutes

Objective

- To reflect on the meaning of democracy

Materials

- Two signs with 'I agree' and 'I disagree' written on them

Step-by-step instructions

1. Put the 'I agree' and 'I disagree' signs on two ends of the room.
2. Explain the group that you will read out different statements and they have to go to either side of the room, depending on whether they agree or disagree with the statement.
3. When everyone has found their positions, you can ask one or two people from each side to explain their opinions. They can try to convince the others to change their side.

Statements

- In a democracy, the majority wins.
- Elections are always democratic.
- Democracy is only about voting.
- Democracy only works if everyone is equal.
- Families need to be democratic.
- Schools cannot function democratically.
- In a democracy, everyone must have one vote, no matter how old they are and where they are from.
- Democracy can only work in one country, not internationally.
- Only people who understand what they vote for should have the right to vote.

Debriefing

- How did you feel in the discussion?
- Was it easy to decide where to stand?
- Who decides in your group? Is that democratic?
- How would you like to take decisions in your group?

Tips for facilitators

You can add more statements that fit to your group and purpose. Allow for discussion when needed, but make it a quick activity so people who talk less don't get bored.



River Crossing

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

- To develop co-operative ways of working
- To develop a sense of group
- To reflect on different roles and responsibilities in a group

Materials

- 4-5 A4 papers (if you are more than 20, have more papers)
- 2 ropes or masking tape

Step-by-step instructions

1. Set up the river banks with the rope or masking tape. Make the river wide enough so that it will be challenging for the group to get from one side to the other only by stepping on the papers.
2. Explain that the whole group has to cross the river as a team. Participants cannot touch the water (floor/grass) and therefore must use rafts (A4 papers) to cross. The water is filled with crocodiles. If someone loses their balance and touches the water, the hand gets eaten (must be put behind the back). If someone steps on the water with their foot, they cannot use this leg anymore. If a person completely comes off the raft the whole team needs to go back to the river bank and start over.
3. Rafts must be in contact with a human at all times or they will be swept away by the current. Once the group has started to cross, your role as a facilitator is to take cardboard squares that are 'swept away by the current' (that no one stands on) and to watch for safety issues. The participants will invariably split up and leave some rafts here or there with no one contacting them, those you should quickly take away.

Debriefing

- How did you feel during the exercise?
- What happened during the crossing? What worked? What didn't or what hindered the crossing?
- What roles did different people take? How so?
- Were you comfortable with your role?
- Who knew how to cross the river? How did you communicate the plans to group members?
- How could the co-operative values have helped you in this activity? Which ones?

Tips for facilitators

This can be a very good team building activity, but also a good activity to reflect on co-operation as a tool to achieve our goals and overcome challenges. It also helps to work on communication within your group.

An alternative is the activity *Cow Shit Game*.



Cow Shit Game

Age: 10+
Group Size: 5-30
Time: 45 minutes

Objectives

- To develop co-operative ways of working
- To develop a sense of a group
- To reflect on different roles and responsibilities in a group

Materials

- Chalk or masking tape

Step-by-step instructions

1. Mark out a grid of squares on the floor using tape or chalk.
2. Then, on a piece of paper, draw a corresponding map showing one safe route across the grid. The participants do not get to see this map.
3. Explain the group that the grid is a field that is covered in lots of cow shit. No one wants to step into cow shit, so the players have to figure out the only safe route across the field while walking in a single line and holding hands.
4. Once the crossing begins, they are not allowed to talk. If anyone talks, the whole group must return to the start. The group has to find the safe route across the field by trial and error and memory skills.
5. The first player in the line starts, choosing a route one square at a time (movements can be made forward, left or right). Everyone else follows in their steps.
6. If anyone steps on cow shit (according to the map), the group has to start again and the player who was at the front of the line must go to the back.

Debriefing

- How did you like the activity?
- What happened during the activity? What worked? What didn't or what hindered the process?
- What roles did different people take during the process? How so?
- Were you comfortable with your role?
- Who knew how to cross the field?
- How did you communicate?
- How could the co-operative values have helped you in this activity? Which ones?

Tips for facilitators

This can be a very good team building activity, but also a good activity to reflect on co-operation as a tool to achieve our goals and overcome challenges. It also helps to work on communication within your group.

An alternative to this exercise is the activity *River Crossing*.



Snakes and Ladders

Age: 8+
Group Size: 4-30
Time: 60 minutes

Objective

- To introduce the basics of co-operatives

Materials

- Copies of the playing field (one for each group of minimum four people) or chalk to draw a huge board game
- Dice
- Playing pieces
- Copies of statement and surprise cards (appendix)
- Flipchart paper and markers

Step-by-step instructions

1. You can either play this game in small groups with a printed playing field, or draw a huge playing field in an outside area, where the participants themselves can be the playing pieces.
2. Ask the participants to form small teams of 2-4 people that play together.
3. Roll the dice. The team with the lowest number starts.
4. The first team rolls the dice and moves forward according to the number on the dice.
5. What happens next depends on the square where the player lands:
 - If a team lands on a square with the bottom of a ladder, the team moves up to the square at the top of the ladder.
 - If a team lands on a square containing the end of the tail of a snake, the team moves down the snake to the square containing the head of the snake.
 - If a team lands on a square with a question mark, the facilitator picks up a 'statement card' and reads the statement aloud. The team needs to say if they think the statement is true or false. If their answer is correct, they can move forward two squares.
 - If a team lands on a square with a star, they have to take one of the "surprise cards" and do what is described on the card.
6. The next team rolls the dice.
7. The game is over when a team reaches the last space.

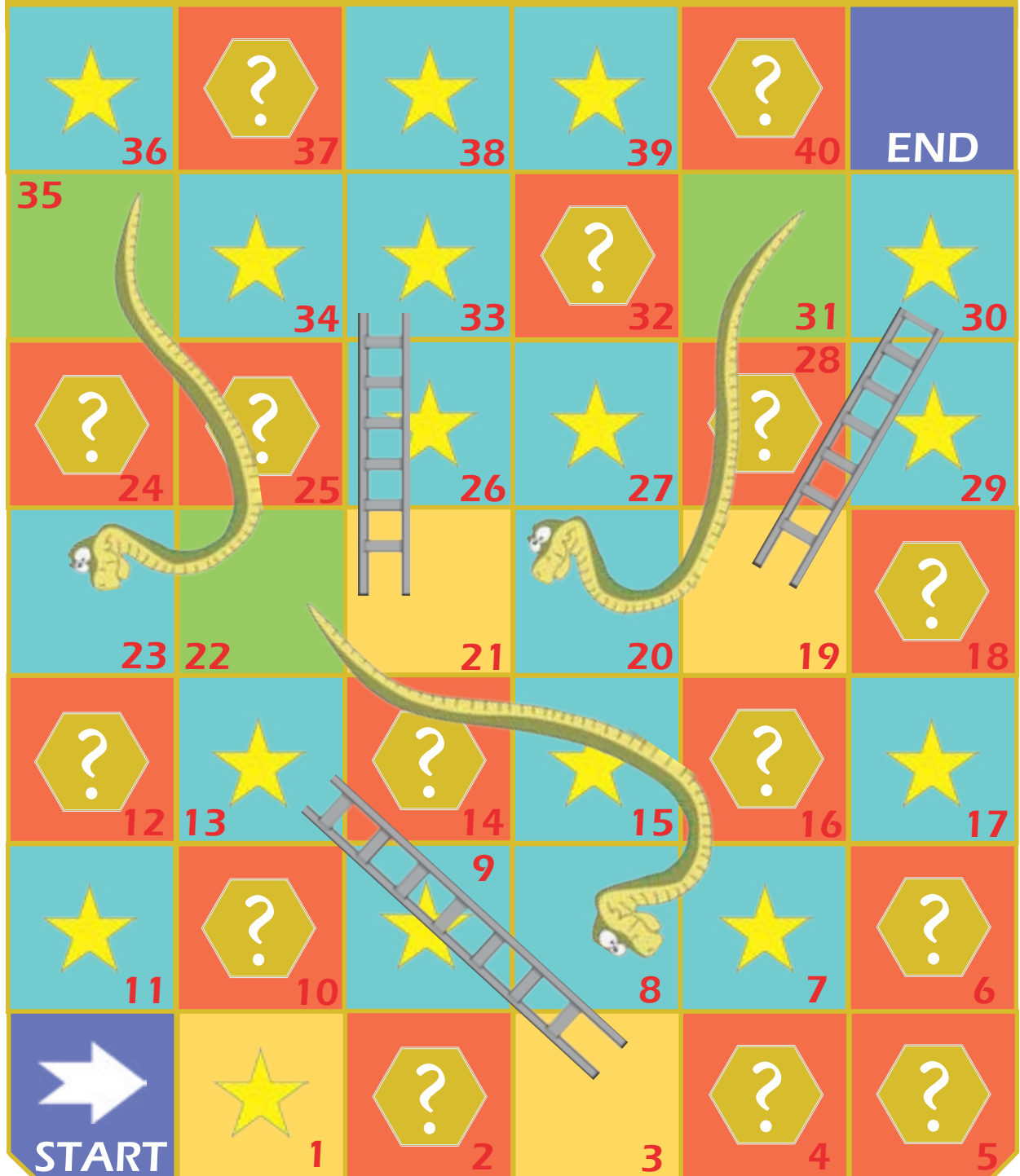
Debriefing

- How did you like this activity?
- What were the most difficult statements?
- Do you know any co-operatives in your country?
- What is the difference between co-operatives and other forms of business?
- How can people benefit from co-operatives? (Write the answers on flipchart paper)



Introducing Co-operation

Appendix: Playing field





Appendix: Statement cards



Co-operatives can only be founded by people over 18.

False. The legal requirements for officially registered businesses are different from country to country, but no one hinders you to start a small informal co-operative together with other young people.

Co-operatives don't make any profit.

False. Co-operatives can make a profit just like other enterprises, but not for an individual or a group of investors. The main aim is to fulfil the needs of its members. The profit would be shared between members.

All co-operatives follow a set of seven principles. Can you name all? If so, go forward one more step.

True. The principles are voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and information, co-operation among co-operatives and concern for the community.

All co-operatives are based on a set of six values. Can you name all? If so, go forward one more step.

True. The values are self-help, self-responsibility, solidarity, equity, equality and democracy.

The workers of a co-operative have to be members of the co-operative.

False. Membership in a co-operative is voluntary. In some co-operatives, all customers are members and the workers are not. In others, only workers are members. Also workers co-operatives can employ other people who are not members.

Co-operatives work on a small scale.

False. There are co-operatives with just a few members only working locally, but others are huge national enterprises with millions of members.

A co-operative is run democratically. All members have one vote.

True. No matter how much each member can contribute, everyone has the same say in the decision-making.

Everyone can become a member in every co-operative.

False. Although usually co-operatives aim to have open membership, sometimes only workers of the enterprise can become members, so that they can decide on their own how they want to work. Of course, they will still show concern for the community and also take the well-being of their customers into account.

Co-operatives exist since the 19th century.

True. The first successful co-operative we know about was founded in 1844 by 28 workers in Rochdale, UK.



Introducing Co-operation



Co-operatives organise training and education for their members.

True. Education, Training and Information is one of the co-operative principles and co-operatives provide education on various topics to their members.

There are two ethical values of co-operatives.

Can you name all? If so, go forward one more step.

False. There are three ethical values, which are: Honesty and Openness, Social Responsibility and Caring for others.

Banks cannot be co-operatives.

False. Also banks can be co-operatives and in many countries there are co-operative banks, for whom people are more important than profit.

Co-operatives should buy Fair Trade products whenever this is possible.

True. If co-operatives want to follow their own values and principles, then they can only buy products for which the producers got a fair price and that are produced in line with good social and environmental standards.

In the USA, there are no co-operatives.

False. There are nearly 30,000 co-operatives in the US.

In Europe, France has the highest number of members of co-operatives.

True. In France, 32 million people are member of co-operatives.



Appendix: Surprise cards



Your team is not allowed to speak until the next turn

All players have to play the *Lap sit game*.

Your team has to come up with a song and sing it for the other participants.

Your team has to hop on one leg round the table.

Your team has to write your team name with your belly buttons.

Your team has to give a massage to one other team.

Your team can receive a massage from another teams.

You can select another team that will answer the next question for you.

You can change your playing piece with the one that is leading at the moment.

Your team has to change your playing piece with the last player.

Your team has to come up with a co-operative game to play with all participants.

You can come up with a task for one of the other teams.

Your team can throw the dice again.

The next time you come to a snake or a ladder, don't move your playing piece.

Tell the other groups a joke.

Find 5 reasons why co-operation is better than competition.



The Grey Gentlemen

Age: 8+
Group Size: 20-50 (plus at least eight leaders)
Time: 90-120 minutes

Objectives

- To promote co-operation and solidarity
- To introduce co-operative values as a whole

Materials

- Juices in 6 different colours (if possible)
- A hard plastic glass or cup for every participant
- A big pot and a big spoon to serve the potion
- Body paint in 6 different colours
- Other materials in these colours (for example paper, wool, cloth...)
- Paper
- A picture (simple painting or photo)
- Disguises to identify the value people and the Grey Gentlemen
- Markers: black for the Grey Gentlemen and 6 other colours
- Copies of the passports for each participant (appendix)

Preparation

- Copy and cut out the passports for each participant
 - Prepare disguises for the Grey Gentlemen and the value people
 - Prepare six different stations for the six co-operative values
 - The leaders will play the following characters:
 - 6 “values” to represent one of the co-operative values and one of the six different colours.
 - 1 “co-operator” who is in charge of the big pot where the potion will be mixed
 - 3 Grey Gentlemen who must be hidden until the beginning of the game
- If you don't have enough leaders, you can also ask some participants to help with these roles.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduce the story to participants:
We are living in a capitalist world that is getting worse and worse every day. But we still know that living together and helping each other is great. At the moment, we are all in great danger. The Grey Gentlemen are coming: grey business men who want to create an individualistic world where people only work for themselves to become richer every day. The only way to convince them of the power of co-operation is to create and drink a powerful and colourful co-op potion. If we manage to do that, we will take a great step forward! The battle for a better world has started!
2. Divide the participants into 6 different teams with equal numbers of people. Assign each team a colour. Give them body paints and other colourful things (paper/ wool, etc.) and leave some time for them to get ready with the colours of their team. Give each participant a passport and a glass/cup.
3. Explain that to create the potion and be able to convince the Grey Gentlemen, the participants have to fill a pot with juices in the different colours.
4. Before they can start to collect the juices, the participants have to get their passports signed by all six value people.
5. In order to get their passports signed, participants have to be in groups of 6 people (or more), with the 6 different colours represented. In these groups, they have to fulfil small tasks at different stations:



Introducing Co-operation

- **Blind counting:** The participants stand in a circle and close their eyes. Their task is to count to 20, but without following any predefined order of who will say the next number. If two people say the same number at the same time, the facilitator starts again with number 1 (Self-responsibility).
 - **Explain the picture:** The group stands in a line, one person behind the other. The last person receives a picture and needs to explain the person in front of them what is on this picture (by whispering in their ear). This person has to explain what they heard to the next one. The person in the front will have to draw the picture. Then, compare the picture with the original (Solidarity).
 - **Human knot:** In a circle, all participants hold hands and close their eyes. Then they step closer together, reach out to the middle and grab another hand. They can then open their eyes and try to undo the knot without losing the hands they are holding (Equity).
 - **Line:** Ask the participants to stand on chairs. They then have to put themselves in order (by age, birth date, rainbow colours, etc.) without stepping on the floor (Equality).
 - **Word writing:** Ask participants to form a given word with their bodies, like a human statue (Democracy).
 - **Two heads, three legs:** Ask the participants to walk around until you shout a command, such as 'two heads, three legs' or 'five legs and one stomach'. The participants need to form groups and fulfil this command: only the body parts mentioned can touch the floor. There can be for example three people in a group, each standing on one leg and two of them touching the floor with their head (Self-help).
6. Once they have fulfilled the task, the value person at that station will sign their passports in the correct field.
 7. The groups can then find a new value person to fulfil the next task.
 8. When participants have collected all signatures, they can start asking the value people to fill their glasses with juice (in the colour of their group) to bring it to the common pot. They will get the juice from the values person in their colour.
 9. The Grey Gentlemen want to prevent participants to prepare the potion by catching them.
If a Grey Gentleman catches a participant, two things can happen: Either they cross out all the signatures participants have in their passport, or they drink the glass of juice participants are carrying.
 10. Participants can protect themselves from the Grey Gentlemen by going in groups of the 6 colours, holding hands. The Grey Gentlemen will only be able to catch participants that run alone.
 11. The game finishes when the time is over or when participants have filled the whole pot (or a minimum quantity defined by the co-operator). Then the co-operator will announce that participants won the battle, but that they have to convince the Grey Gentlemen that co-operating is better than being individualistic. Participants have to find the Grey Gentlemen and convince them to drink the magic potion and play co-operative games with them.
 12. When the Grey Gentlemen are convinced, split into small groups of participants to talk about the battle.

Debriefing

- How did you like the activity?
- What happened during the game?
- Which were the best moments? Why?
- Did you have a strategy?
- If you would play again, would you do something differently?
- Did you work together with the other teams? Why (not)?
- When did you start to co-operate with the other teams? Why?
- How did co-operation change the game?
- How could co-operation change your daily life? Think of some examples.



Appendix: Passport

Passport of Co-operation

Name:

Group colour:

Self-help

Equality

Self-responsibility

Equity

Democracy

Solidarity

Adaptation of the activity "Els invisibles s'apopen" from Esplais Catalans (www.esplac.cat)



Share of the Profit

Age: 12+
Group size: 10-30
Time: 90 minutes

Objective

- To introduce the concept of Fair Trade

Materials

- Photo of a pair of trainers
- Copies of the role descriptions (appendix 1)
- Flipchart paper and markers
- A flipchart showing the different parts of production (appendix 2), without the prices
- 5 copies of the trainer puzzle (appendix 3)

Step-by-step instructions

1. Show participants the photo of a pair of trainers. Ask everyone to say how much they would be willing to pay for the pair. Calculate the average of the price the participants are willing to pay. Tell them that the trainers are sold for 100 Euro.
2. Split into five groups. Each group gets a description of one of the following roles:
 - Worker
 - Retailer
 - Brand company
 - Subcontractor
 - Publicity company
3. The groups read their role description and have to decide how much they would like to earn for their work to produce one pair of shoes (anything between 0 and 100 Euros).
4. Ask every group how much they want to earn and add all wages together. If the amount is higher than 100 Euros, ask them to go back into their groups to discuss if they are willing to earn less. After some minutes, come back in the big group and let them negotiate with each other on how to reach 100 Euros.
5. Discuss if the division they negotiated is fair.
6. Now reveal the real division of the price for the trainers through the trainer puzzle: Distribute a set of puzzle pieces to each group. In their groups they should put the puzzle together and discuss which person/company in the production line gets which amount. Show them the flipchart paper with the list of production parts, without the prices. Then reveal the right answers.

Debriefing

- Is this fair?
- Why is the situation like this?
- What needs to change to make the production line fairer?
- What can you as consumers do to change the situation?
- What does this have to do with co-operation and co-operatives?



Appendix 1: Roles

Factory workers

You are a group of 50 factory workers in Vietnam. You work in a shoe company in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. You are between 16 and 60 years old. Most of you have families, often with 3 or more children. You work every day from 8am to 6pm. Some of you cut out pieces of leather for the shoes, others sew them together, and some pack them into boxes. You have 30 minutes break for lunch and a 10-minute break every two hours. Together you can produce 100 pairs of trainers per day.

What should you get for producing one pair of trainers?

Subcontractor

You own a shoe company in Hanoi, Vietnam. You employ 50 workers who produce trainers. You sell the trainers to an international sport fashion company. You have a wife and two children.

What should you get for one pair of trainers? Don't include the wage of your workers, but include:

- Material costs of one pair of trainers: 10 Euro
- Transport to the international company and customs: 5 Euro
- Your profit

Brand company

You are the owner of an international sport fashion company. You live in the United States. You buy trainers from your subcontractors in Vietnam, Indonesia and China and sell them to shops all over the world. All shoes have your brand name on it. You do a lot of research so that people can run faster with your shoes. How much money do you want to get from one pair of trainers? Include:

- Research costs: 11 Euro per pair of trainers
- Your profit

Publicity company

You own a publicity company. You do advertisement for the brand name of trainers, and also for the retailer shop that sells the shoes. You live in Germany.

How much should you get for the publicity for one pair of trainers?

Retailer

You own a small sports shop situated in the city centre of a European capital. You sell lots of different sport products, including trainers. You have a family and live in a house in the suburbs. How much money do you want to get from one pair of trainers for your work in the shop? Include:

- VAT: 17 Euro
- Your profit

Appendix 2: Parts of production and their prices

Labour costs (factory workers): 0.5 €

Profit subcontractor: 3 €

Labour of retailer: 18 €

Material: 10 €

Transport and tax: 7.5 €

Publicity: 20 €

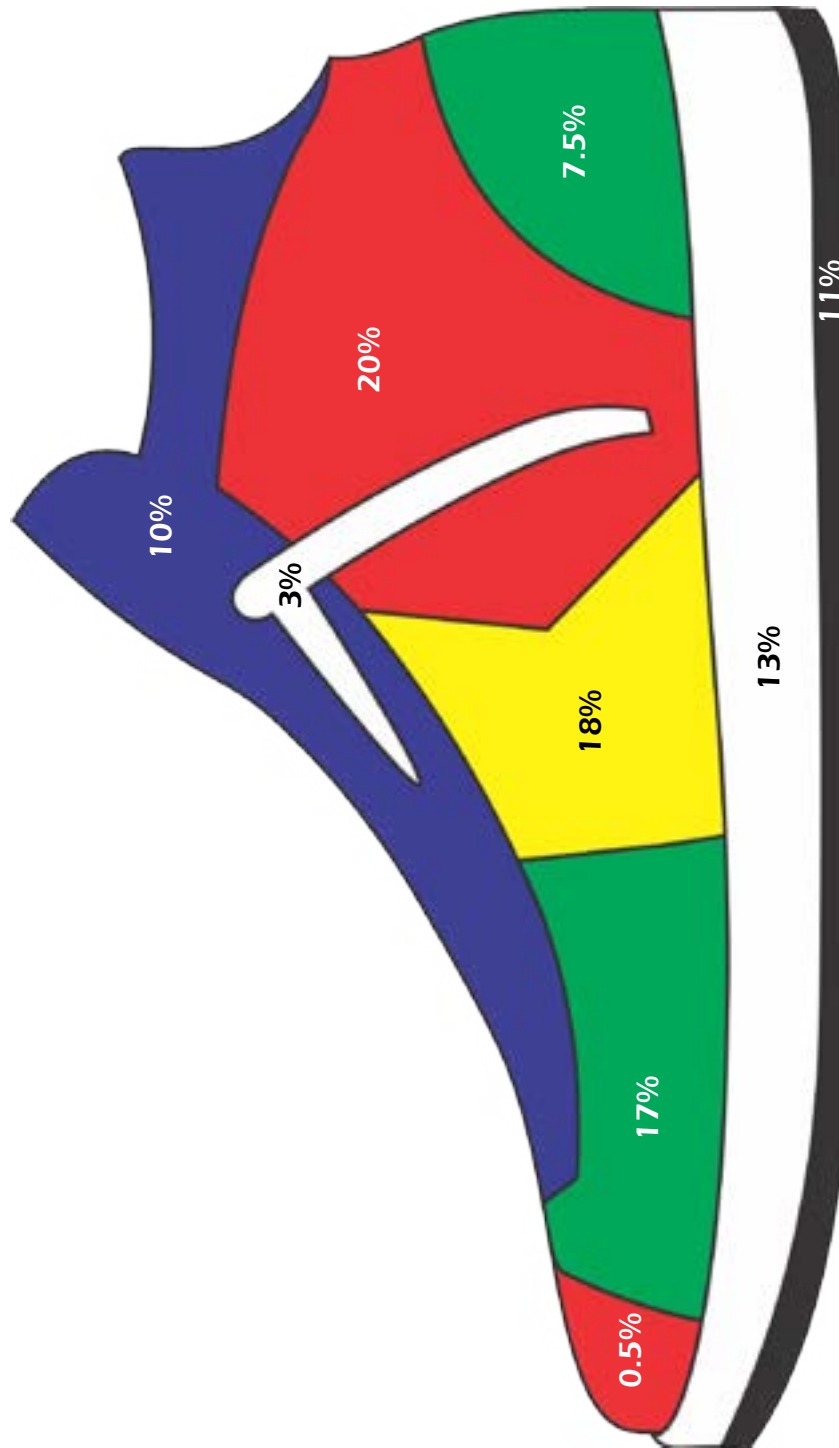
Profit brand company: 13 €

Research: 11 €

VAT: 17 €



Appendix 3: Trainer Puzzle





Finding Ideas

- Introducing Co-operation
- **Finding Ideas**
- Getting Organised
- Doing Business
- Checking Back

Once you have explored the co-operative values and principles, you might be convinced that you want to set up a co-operative. But, what for? What about?

Now it is time to develop ideas for goods or services your co-operative can provide.

In this phase the first important thing is to collect ideas. Afterwards, you have to do some market research to check if your idea is actually needed in the community. Together with your colleagues and friends you can also start going out into the community to ask them about their needs and wants.

In the following pages you will find a number of tools and methods that can help you and your group to work creatively to build ideas and to further develop them. Good luck!

Ruta del Cuarzo

A small village in the valley of Elqui in Chile used to depend completely on a quartz mine that employed the majority of the population. The mine closed a few years ago and left most people without regular income.

Members of the children and youth organisation Manque Chile used the Co-operAction project to start reviving the local economy. At a meeting of young people in the village they discussed that they actually had a lot of attractions to offer tourists. So they decided to organise touristic tours to their part of the valley for people visiting La Serena, the next bigger city. Some members of the co-operative are responsible for advertising and management, whereas others go on horseback-riding tours, prepare meals for visiting groups, and show them the quartz mine and other attractions in the region.





Corazón de la Montaña

The *El corazon de la montaña* (Heart of the Mountain) cooperative offers catering to companies, NGOs and institutions in Bogotá in Colombia. The members come from Santa Cecilia, a neighbourhood built on the mountains surrounding Bogotá struck by a lot of poverty and violence.

They built a 'wall garden' in the community centre of Fundacion Acacia that provides vegetables for the catering service and at the same time teaches children and young people how to grow their own food on very little space and without using pesticides.

"We have organised workshops about the history and values of co-operatives and have carried out various activities to put together our business plan. We have also participated in cookery workshops to develop our kitchen skills.



The co-operative belongs to every member and is for everyone. Everyone carries out their individual and group tasks and everyone involved has made a contribution to the co-operative. We still need to define which part of the business will be overseen by which member; having a defined role will help keep all the members involved. At the moment, the co-operative isn't recruiting more members as we don't have enough orders yet for the business to be viable with more people. In the future, when the co-op is more established, we hope that more people will join it. We are, however, being inclusive in the sense that we have designed our products with different clients in mind. There is a range of products on the menu (with vegetarian options available) and prices that suit different budgets".



Banana Solutions

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 30 minutes

Objectives

- To stimulate creativity
- To realise how many ideas can be created when you let the mind run wild

Materials

- Sticky notes
- One banana per small group

Step-by-step instructions

1. Divide the group into smaller groups and give each a banana and sticky notes.
2. Explain the group that they will have 10 minutes to come up with as many ideas for businesses to do with their banana as possible and to write each idea on a sticky note.
3. In turn each group should bring their sticky notes to the front, stick them on a flipchart, and briefly explain their ideas.

Debriefing

- Which are the best ideas?
- Which would be easiest/hardest to do?
- Which idea would be the most fun to do?
- Have any of the ideas got 'fatal flaws' which would make them impossible to implement?
- Can any of the ideas be improved?

Tips for facilitators

After this exercise you can do a brainstorm on ideas for the co-operative business of the group.





Connect Two

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 20 minutes

Objective

- To generate ideas connecting community needs and personal interests

Materials

- Slips of papers
- Pens
- Two boxes for each group

Step-by-step instructions

1. Give each participant two small slips of paper. On the first slip of paper they should write a hobby they have.
2. Collect these in and put them in one of the boxes.
3. On the second slip of paper, everyone should write something which they believe is a problem for people in their community
4. Again, collect these in the second box.
5. Shake the boxes up and then ask each member of your group to pick a slip from each box.
6. Now ask participants to think of a business idea which links the hobby and the problem together.
7. For example:
 - Hobby: Computers
 - Community problem: Poor public transport in rural areas
 - Enterprise idea: Set up a website where people can arrange car-sharing and offer lifts, with advertising sponsorship from the local garage.

Debriefing

Discuss with the whole group if any of the ideas could be interesting to further develop for their own co-operative.

*** Activity taken from the Young co-operatives Action Kit Key Stage 3/4 ** (Co-operative College, Manchester)*



World Café

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-30
Time: 90 minutes

Objective

- To generate ideas out of discussions

Materials

- Tables and chairs
- Flipchart papers or paper table cloth/old wallpapers
- Markers
- Snacks
- Flipchart with Café Etiquette written on (appendix)

Step-by-step instructions

1. Before using this method you need to brainstorm business ideas. You can use 'Connect two' to come up with business ideas to be further discussed in the World Café.
2. Set up a number of café-style tables with paper tablecloths to record ideas that the conversation generates. Prepare some snacks for each table, offer drinks so that participants feel welcome.
3. Explain the rules of the World Café:
 - There are X number of tables, one per business idea. At each table you will discuss one of these ideas. Give participants a number of questions that can guide their discussions:
 - i. What is good/bad about the idea?
 - ii. How could it be changed to improve it?
 - iii. How could it be implemented?
 - iv. How could it be done more successful?
 - v. Are there any challenges that you can already foresee in implementing it?
 - After 20-30 minutes, members will move to a new table. It is important that people mix.
 - It is possible to move quicker and "cross-pollinate" ideas or to stay longer if something got your complete attention and interest or if you feel that you contribute more if you move quicker around.
 - One member of the initial group stays at the same table and acts as host to facilitate the new discussion, explaining what has been discussed before. It will help the new group to go more into depth.
 - Make sure that all ideas are written down!
4. Explain the Café Etiquette. (appendix)
5. Start the World Café and give information on the timing.

Debriefing

In plenary, the hosts will present what came out of the discussions and the whole group can discuss the points they consider most important.

- What ideas are worth following up?
- What needs to be done next?
- How to choose between the different ideas?



Tips for facilitators

Instead of the World Café, you could also do a silent discussion, where participants share, discuss and connect ideas in writing. This often encourages more quiet participants to contribute.

Appendix: Café Etiquette

- Focus on what matters
- Contribute your thinking
- Speak your mind
- Listen to understand
- Link and connect ideas
- Listen together for insights and deeper questions
- Play, doodle, draw; writing on the tablecloths is encouraged
- Have fun!





Market Research

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10
Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

- To improve an idea or product through market research
- To receive ideas and feedback from potential customers

Materials

- A quiet space
- Papers and pens
- Flipchart paper and markers

Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask participants to think about what is important when they want to sell a product. What makes people buy a product? Let them shout out everything they come up with and collect their answers on a flipchart paper.
2. They will probably come up with things such as 'it needs to be cheap', 'people must need the product' etc.
3. Explain that it is important to get feedback from customers on whether they like the product you are developing and whether they would be willing to buy it. Then ask how they could get this feedback.
4. Explain that in marketing, to get feedback many professionals use 'focus groups'. Focus groups are small groups of people who are asked to discuss a new idea or a new product and give their opinion on different aspects of the product or idea before it is put on the market. This can help producers to check if the product will be successful or if they have to improve it.
5. Explain that participants can organise a focus group interview to get feedback on their business idea.
6. Ask them to discuss what they want to get out of the focus group interviews. If they are unsure what this could be, propose the following points:
 - Do they want to know if their business idea is something that the community needs?
 - Do they want to know how to improve their idea?
 - Do they want to find out how much customers would spend on the product?
 - Do they want to find out how to improve the design of the product?
 - Do they want to find out what kind of marketing strategy would attract customers?
 - Do they want to find out something else?
7. Agree on concrete objectives for the focus group. This will help to formulate the right questions.
8. Before starting to plan the focus groups, introduce the tips (appendix) to the participants. These will help them to get the most out of the discussion.
9. Ask participants to plan and conduct one or more focus group interviews about their business idea, following the tips for conducting focus groups (appendix).

Debriefing

- Did you find it useful?
- How did the interview help you to improve your product?
- Which feedback will you take on?



Tips for facilitators

Market research can be done in several stages of the setting-up process: To find an idea, to check if potential customers like the idea and to get feedback on what features of the product could be improved. After one or more focus group interviews, it might make sense to get more feedback on specific aspects through for example a survey (online or on the streets/in school).

If you want to practice how to formulate open questions with your participants, you could try out communication exercise V in IFM-SEI's 'Peers without Frontiers' publication: <http://ifm-sei.org/toolbox/peers-without-frontiers/tools/communication>.

Appendix: Tips for conducting focus groups

- **Questions:** The most important in a focus group is to ask the right questions. Use open questions that don't lead the group to give a specific answer and that cannot be answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no' (ask: 'why would you buy this' instead of: 'would you buy it').
- **Anonymity:** The focus group should be interviewed by someone who is not involved in your co-operative. Then the participants will be more willing to criticise your product and will speak more freely.
- **Environment:** Find a clean, quiet and relaxed space to conduct the interview.
- **Finding the right people:** Invite people who represent your target market. You could invite people through social media, or through a poster in your school. Generally it helps to offer an incentive, something that motivates people to come (like offering a free meal).
- **Number of participants:** You want enough people to hear different opinions; but not so many that the discussion becomes difficult. Between 3 and 10 is a good number.
- **Use the results:** It only makes sense if you really use the results, even if it's often difficult to face criticism.



Garden of Expectations

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 30 minutes

Objective

- To express and share expectations towards the co-operative enterprise

Materials

- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- Post-its (If you have time, you can also cut out paper in the form and colour of seeds and stones)
- Coloured papers
- Pens

Step-by-step instructions

1. Draw a big garden on a piece of flipchart paper (a little bit of grass, the sun, the sky...) and put it on a wall. You should also draw a small bucket next to the garden.
2. Explain participants that this will be the moment to share their expectations towards their co-operative project:
 - What do you expect from the co-operative?
 - What do you want to take home as a result of your participation in the enterprise?
 - Are there things you absolutely do not want to do within the co-operative?
3. Explain that being aware and reflecting on own expectations from the outset will help the group to be focused on their needs and objectives during the project. It will also allow participants to find out about the needs and wishes of the others.
4. Distribute post-its in two different colours. One colour represents the seeds of plants that can grow in the garden (what they expect from the co-op, what results they want to see, etc.). the other type of post-it are stones that represent their fears. The stones can prevent the seeds (expectations) to grow.
5. Leave some time for participants to think about their expectations and their fears and to write them down on the 'seeds' and 'stones' post-its (one point per post-it).
6. When they are ready, they can post their seeds and stones in the garden.
7. Ask if someone wants to explain what they wrote.
8. Explain that during the length of the project, time spaces will be provided to make the garden grow. At the end of meetings, you should leave some time for participants to go to the garden and think about whether their expectations have been fulfilled. If so, they can draw a plant growing from their seeds. They can also check if the fears on the stones are still present. If not, they can remove the stones and put them into the bucket next to the garden.
9. By the end of the project, you will have a garden full of plants in case participants felt their expectations were fulfilled.

Debriefing

At the end of the project you can review the garden with participants. Ask questions such as:

- Do you think your expectations were fulfilled?
- The ones that were not, do you want to explain why?
- What about the fears? Did they disappear? Why? Which didn't disappear?

Tips for facilitators

This method is useful for long-term projects, as it gives you and the participants an overview on how the project is evolving.



Getting Organised

- Introducing Co-operation
- Finding Ideas
- **Getting Organised**
- Doing Business
- Checking Back

Now that you have a business idea, it is time to get organised. Who will be the members of your co-operative? Workers? Consumers? Who will be your stakeholders? How will you take decisions in the co-operative? How will you put co-operative values into practice? Who will be responsible for what? Do you need any training before you can start working?

In this phase the first important thing is to get to know each other and develop your ways of working together and sharing responsibilities. On the following pages you will find a number of tools and methods that can help you and your group to start working together and organising yourselves as a group.



Useful sources:

- Simply Legal: http://www.uk.coop/sites/storage/public/downloads/simplylegal_0.pdf
- Simply Governance: http://www.uk.coop/sites/storage/public/downloads/coopsuk_simplygovernance_webdownload_0.pdf



Kruti Co-operative Society/Gramin Vikas Co-operative

"We are a student based co-operative that teaches the fundamentals of computers to people of all ages of our poor neighbourhood and we try our best to help them find employment. We are a mixed co-operative, our members are both people coming to our classes and the students running the classes. The workers are students from different colleges. The unique part is that none of the members is an adult.

We have a working group of 20 people who have different jobs according to their liking. We plan our activities by meeting every Sunday and researched about the areas where people need us. At the meetings all the members of the co-operative are present. We have a discussion session and each one gets the chance to give their opinion. Each opinion is discussed well and the decision is taken by giving a vote. Each member has the right to vote and all are equal. To stay connected, we have a group on 'Whatsapp' where we regularly talk and discuss. All the members get along really well!"



Välkommen Hit, Välkommen Hem (Welcome Here, Welcome Home)



The Falcon group in Uppsala, Sweden wants to work with a group of unaccompanied minors who live in a refugee centre in their city: make them feel at home and involve them in Falcon activities. For now, the members are only young people from the Falcon group, but in the long run it would be great if the children living in the refugee home will also join.

The group explains: "As an income, we decided to sell fabric bags that we designed and printed ourselves. We searched the internet for fair trade and organic bags, and found a page where we could buy fabric bags with good certification for a reasonable price. We then decided for three different designs: one with just our name (Unga Örnar) and a dove (that was meant to look like a falcon), one with the comic strip about the shark and the fishes and "United we stand", and finally one with the skyline of our city and the tag line "Welcome

here, welcome home". We printed all the bags for free at a youth centre, and have now sold the majority of them, most of them through facebook by creating an event. Through selling the bags we've had the chance to tell a lot of people about our co-op, some of them are now interested in volunteering with us!"



Building Bridges

Age: 10+
Group Size: 5 or more
Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

- To raise awareness of different roles in your group
- To reflect on roles and responsibilities in team work

Materials

- Paper
- Masking tape
- Big stone

Step-by-step instructions

1. Split participants into groups of four to six. One person in each group will be an observer and cannot interfere in the group work.
2. Each group receives paper and masking tape. With these materials, they need to build a bridge. The bridge needs to be strong enough to hold a heavy stone and must cross a river that is at least 15cm wide and 10cm high.
3. While the groups are trying to fulfil the task, the observers should take note of the following:
 - How do the groups work together?
 - Who takes which roles (leader, builder, giving ideas...)?
 - What are their challenges?
 - What do they do well?

Debriefing

First ask the participants:

- How are you now?
- Are you satisfied with the work in your group?
- What role did you take? Were you happy in this role?
- How did you communicate? How did you take decisions?

Then ask the observers:

- How well did you think the group managed the task?
- How did they work together?
- What roles did people take?

Ask everyone:

- What would be a co-operative way to take decisions?
- What roles and responsibilities do you have to divide in your co-operative? How can you do this?
- How can you find out about skills in the group?
- How can you set rules for your group?

The facilitator should take notes of the last points on flipchart paper.



Spider Web

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-30
Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

- To reflect on different roles and responsibilities in a group
- To create a strong sense of group

Materials

- Rope
- Markers and flipchart paper

Preparation

- Between two trees, create a spider web with many different holes (in groups for up to 15 people as many holes as people in the group) in different sizes. Each hole should be big enough for a person to fit through.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that the whole group has to get to the other side of the spider web, using the holes in the web to pass through. The only rules are:
 - Every hole can only be used by one person (in groups over 10 people: by 2 people).
 - No one is allowed to touch the rope at any point. If someone touches, everyone has to go back to the start side of the web.
2. After 30 minutes (or after the group succeeded), break up and come together for the debriefing.

Debriefing

- Are you satisfied with the work of the group?
- How did you take decisions?
- Are you satisfied with your own contribution? Why (not)?
- What role did you take? What roles did others take?
- What would be a co-operative way to take decisions?
- What roles and responsibilities do you have to divide in your co-operative? How can you do this?
- How can you find out about skills in the group?
- How can you set rules for your group?

The facilitator should take notes of the last points on flipchart paper.



The Egg Challenge

Age: 10+
Group Size: 5-30
Time: 60 minutes

Objective

- To reflect on different roles and responsibilities within a group

Materials

- Eggs (one per group of four people)
- String
- Paper
- Tape
- 2 balloons per group
- 2 straws per group

Step-by-step instructions

1. Split up in small groups of 4 or 5 people and give an egg, some sheets of A4 paper, one role of masking tape, one meter of string, 2 balloons and 2 straws to each group.
2. Each group has one observer (this can be done by participants or group leaders). The observers are not allowed to interfere, but must observe how the group manages their task.
3. Explain that their task will be to throw the egg from the first floor of a building (or another high place) without breaking it.
4. They have 30 minutes to prepare their eggs for the flying contest and can only use the materials they received.
5. After 30 minutes, let the groups throw their eggs and see whose egg survives.

Debriefing

First ask the participants:

- What happened? Did you manage to throw the egg without breaking it?
- How did you do it?
- How did it feel to achieve or to fail the challenge?
- How did you agree on the way to prepare the egg?
- How did you feel during the preparation?
- What role do you think you took on? Were you happy in that role? Why (not)?

Then ask the observers:

- How well do you think the group managed the task?
- How did they work together?
- What roles did people take?

Ask everyone:

- If you did it again, would you do it the same way?
- What would you change? Why?
- Why did you fail or succeed?
- What would be a co-operative way to take decisions?
- What roles and responsibilities do you have to divide in your co-operative? How can you do this?
- How can you find out about skills in the group?
- How can you set rules for your group?

The facilitators should take notes of the last points on flipchart paper.



The Bottle Challenge

Age: 12+
Group Size: 7-30
Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

- To consider different roles and responsibilities within a group
- To build a strong sense of group
- To reflect on the benefits of co-operation

Materials

- Bottles (one per group of 7-9 people)
- Tape
- Flipchart paper and markers

Step-by-step instructions

1. Form small groups of 7-9 people. For each group, put a bottle on the floor and mark a line with masking tape approximately one meter away from it.
2. Explain that their task is to get the bottle that contains a magic potion, and not to step into the area behind the masking tape. This is poisoned water and strictly restricted area.
3. Let the groups try to reach the bottle.
4. When they have succeeded, put the bottle approximately 2m away from the masking tape (it should be in more or less the reach of the tallest participants when they lie down and stretch their arms out).
4. Let the groups try to reach the bottle.

Debriefing

- What happened? Did you manage to get the bottle?
- How did you do it?
- How did it feel to achieve or to fail the challenge?
- How did you agree on the way to get the bottle?
- How did you feel during the process?
- What role do you think you took on?
- If you did it again, would you do it the same way?
- What would you change? Why?
- What would be a co-operative way to take decisions?
- What roles and responsibilities do you have to divide in your co-operative? How can you do this?
- How can you find out about skills in the group?
- How can you set rules for your group?

The facilitator should take notes of the last points on flipchart paper.



The Majority Wins?

Age: 10-15
Group Size: 10-30
Time: 30 minutes

Objectives

- To reflect on different ways of decision-making
- To introduce tips for reaching consensus in a group

Materials

- Flipchart paper and markers
- Copies of the appendix 'tips for consensus-finding' for every participant
- Copies of the role cards

Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain the group that they have to take a very important decision: They need to decide how much school holidays children should have and when. They will all take different roles in the discussion.
2. Split into three groups, with more than half of participants in group 1, less in group 2 and even less in group 3. Give some time for them to read their role description.
3. Come back together and ask them to come to a decision on the matter. Explain that there is one important regulation though: Children are not allowed to vote.
4. Ask for the outcome of the decision. Then ask:
 - How do you like this outcome?
 - Is this a fair way of taking decisions?
6. Explain that the group can take another decision on the same matter. This time, every person has one vote.
7. Give time to decide and then ask for the outcome of the decision.
8. Ask again if participants like the outcome and if it is fair. What do different groups think?
9. In a third round, ask participants to come to a consensus. They should find a solution everyone can agree with. When they have a decision, make sure everyone really agrees.
10. Ask again:
 - How do you like the outcome?
 - Is this a fair way of taking decisions?
11. Give participants a copy of the 'tips for consensus-finding' and read them together.
 - Do you agree?
 - Can you add other tips?
 - Did you use some of them in your discussion?

Debriefing

- What are advantages and disadvantages of different forms of decision-making?
- Do you know other forms of decision-making?
- How do you want to take decisions in your co-operative?



Appendix 1: Role cards

Group 1: You are a group of children. You like school from time to time, because you can meet your friends. But generally you think it's a waste of time. You think you can learn more from your friends or from TV than from your teachers. You think that children should have at least six months holidays per year.

Group 2: You are a group of parents and other adults. You all have jobs, you know how important good work is and you think that your children should work very hard to get a good education. You think that children should have no more than two weeks holiday a year. One week in the summer, one week over Christmas. Otherwise they become lazy and don't learn enough.

Group 3: You are a group of activists who strongly believe in the danger of Christmas. Christmas should not be celebrated any more because you think that it makes capitalist consumerist monsters out of people. You are absolutely against having holidays over Christmas, because the state should not give any importance to one specific religion.

Appendix 2: Tips for consensus-finding

1. The problem, or decision needing to be made, is defined and named. It helps to do this in a way that separates the problems/questions from personalities.
2. Suggest possible solutions. Write them all down, even the crazy ones. Keep the energy up for quick, top-of-the head suggestions.
3. Create space for questions or clarification on the situation.
4. Discuss the options written down. Modify some, eliminate others, and develop a short list. Which are the favourites?
5. State the proposal or choice of proposals so that everybody is clear.
6. Discuss the pros and cons of each proposal – make sure everybody has a chance to contribute.
7. If there is a major objection, return to step 6 (this is the time-consuming bit). Sometimes you may need to return to step 4.
8. If there are no major objections, state the decisions and test for agreement.
9. Acknowledge minor objections and incorporate friendly amendments.
10. Discuss
11. Check for consensus.



A Constitution for our Group

Age: 10-13 years
Group Size: 10-30
Time: 60-90 minutes

Objectives

- To understand the relationship of rights and responsibilities
- To emphasise participation in the creation and protection of rights
- To create an agreed set of rules and responsibilities for the group

Materials

- Pencil and paper for each participant
- Flipchart paper and markers

Step-by-step instructions

1. Explore participants' experience and understanding of rules and responsibilities, starting with some restrictions that they already understand. Ask them to complete sentences such as this: 'I don't have the right to ____ because ...' (e.g. I don't have the right to hit people when I am angry because ... / I don't have the right to treat people unfairly). List these and then ask the participants to turn the statements from positive to negative (e.g. I have the right not to be hit / I have the right to be treated fairly).
2. When participants understand the process of creating positive rights statements such as these, divide them into small groups of four or five. Give each group paper and markers. Explain that:
 - Each small group should make three or four basic rules for the whole group.
 - They should use the phrase 'Everyone has the right to...' (e.g. Everyone has the right to participate).
 - They can only write this down as a right if everyone in the group agrees.
 - The goal is not to have many rules but rules that everyone accepts.
3. Bring the whole group back together and ask each group to present their rules. Record them on a chart such as the one below.
 - First ask for specific rights that groups have identified. Combine similar rights, asking for group approval of any revised language. List these on the flipchart under the 'Rights' column.
 - After listing a right, ask what specific responsibility every individual has to ensure that everyone enjoys this right. Write this in the 'Responsibilities' column next to the right, using language such as, 'I have the responsibility to...', or 'I should...'

Constitution

Rights	Responsibilities
Everyone has the right to be treated fairly.	I have the responsibility to treat everyone fairly.
Everyone has the right to express an opinion.	I should give everyone the right to express an opinion.



5. After including all the rights and responsibilities listed by the small groups, ask the participants to review their draft constitution.
 - Point out that it is better to have a few good rules than too many not-so-good rules. Can any of these rights and responsibilities be combined? Can any be eliminated?
 - Are there other rights and responsibilities that need to be added?
6. When the lists of rights and responsibilities are complete, ask the group whether they could use these statements as a kind of 'constitution' for their group.
 - Are they willing to observe these rules that they made themselves?
 - Who is responsible for making sure that everyone follows this 'constitution'?
 - What happens when someone violates one of the rights?
 - Is it necessary to have consequences for not following rules? Why?
7. When you have arrived at a final version of the 'constitution', make a clean copy and hang it in a prominent place. Explain that these will be your rules for working together.
8. Conclude the discussion by emphasising that rules and responsibilities help us to live together in a way that everyone's rights are respected. Rules protect our rights (e.g. to participate, to have an opinion, to learn, to play, etc.), keep us safe and healthy, and also give us responsibilities to respect the rights of others.

Debriefing

Ask the group to discuss their experience of this activity:

- Was it easy for your small group to develop a list of rights? Was it easy to draw up the list of responsibilities?
- Was it easy to work together in a group? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of working together in a group?
- Were some ideas for rights not agreed on by the whole group? Why?
- What did you do with the ideas that were not agreed on? Did anybody try to convince the rest of the group in order to get agreement? Were any ideas reconsidered?
- What did you learn about yourself in this activity? What did you learn about rules and responsibilities?
- Did you learn anything about co-operation?
- Why do we need rules and responsibilities in our co-operative?

Discuss enforcement of rights and responsibilities, asking questions such as these:

- Now that you have agreed on rights and responsibilities, how will you make sure that everyone observes them?
- Who has the responsibility to see that these rights are respected?
- Should there be some consequence for a person who does not observe the rules? Who should decide on the consequences?

Discuss the relation between your constitution and the co-operative values and principles:

- Did you think about them when developing the constitution?

A few weeks after making the Constitution, ask the group to reconsider it. Point out that laws often have to be improved, eliminated or added:

- Do you still agree on the rights and responsibilities you developed earlier?
- Are some responsibilities harder to observe than others? Why?
- Does anything in the Constitution need to be changed? Eliminated? Added?

Tips for facilitators

Provide examples on how co-operatives can organise and take decisions. Provide examples for codes of conduct and governance or ask participants to find out about what rules other co-operatives have.

Taken from COMPASITO: Manual on human rights education for children, published by the Council of Europe, 2007



Strengths in the Group

Age: 10+
Group Size: 10-15
Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

- To find out about strengths of individuals in the group
- To divide responsibilities between group members

For this activity, you should already have decided on one business idea.

Materials

- Copies of the skills grid (appendix; one per participant)
- Pens and pencils
- Flipchart paper and markers

Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask participants which skills are needed to implement their business idea. List them all on a flipchart paper.
2. Ask participants to come forward to the flipchart paper and put a dot next to the five skills that they think are most important to make their idea a reality. The five with most dots will be selected. If the list is very long, you can also select more than five.
3. Give every member a copy of the skills grid (appendix) and ask them to write the selected skills in the bottom row.
4. Ask them to colour in the squares above each skill up to the row indicating how good they think they are in this area. The more squares they colour in, the better they think they are.
5. Then ask participants to form pairs and fill in the grid for the other person. Explain that this needs to be an honest opinion not based on personalities, but just on these five skills. Make clear that it should help divide responsibilities for the co-operative afterwards, so that each task is done by the best person for the job.
6. You can also make another round, so that each person gets an assessment of two other people from their group.
7. Pairs can compare their self-assessment with what their peers thought by placing the sheets of paper on top of each other and holding them up in front of a window/light.
8. Come back together in the group and ask everyone to say what their highest-ranked skill is. Note the names next to the skills on the flipchart.

Debriefing

- Are you surprised by what others think of your skills or do you agree?
- Is there something everyone is good at?
- Is there something no one is particularly good at? What is it? Is someone willing to learn that skill? Do you need other people to take over specific tasks in the co-operative that require this skill?
- Do you like doing things that require your highest skill?
- Can you divide responsibilities using these results?

Tips for facilitators

Make sure that everyone has a clearly defined responsibility for something that they like to do. You can check back a few weeks later to see if everyone is still happy with their tasks. Do they need any training or support? Do they want to rotate tasks? Do they want more or less to do?



Appendix: Skills grid

Very good					
Good					
Ok					
Needs improving					
Don't have it					
Skill	Skill 1	Skill 2	Skill 3	Skill 4	Skill 5



Doing Business

- Introducing Co-operation
- Finding Ideas
- Getting Organised
- **Doing Business**
- Checking Back

You have a business idea and your group is well organised, now you just have to start doing business!

Where to get money to start? What's your brand? How will you advertise your products and services? How will you manage your finances?

In this phase, you should develop your business idea really in detail, develop your brand and a marketing strategy and work on your budget. Finally, you should put everything into writing and prepare a concrete business plan.

On the following pages you will find useful tips and exercises to work on your business plan, on finances and on marketing.

Birthday parties in Liepaja

"We are a group of young people who met at the organisation Liepajas Jaunie Vanagi. There was an idea to make parties for children. Taking into account that the idea cannot be realised by one person, we needed to have a team, thus we created the co-operative.

We thought about this business idea, because Liepaja does not have many children's party organizers, but the demand for them is high. The demand for children party organizers is getting higher, because the parents don't want to worry and waste their time organising them.

We have a financial plan which we made in Manchester, and it has been used in real life now.

We use a website to offer our service, but there is an idea to create a separate section about party themes on the website of Liepaja Jaunie Vanagi. We also have the plan to make posters and brochures for distribution in kindergartens and schools".





Co-op Vienna

How to do farming in the middle of a big city? The Falcon co-op in Vienna is doing exactly this. After playing lots of co-operative games and hearing about the Rochdale Pioneers, the group already decided in their first meeting what co-op they wanted to set up. These are their objectives:

- We want to learn how to build raised beds
- We want to learn how to grow organic vegetables
- We want to cook and eat together what we grew
- We want to go out together several times of the year to collect publicly available food like elder or wild garlic.
- With this agricultural commodities, we want to produce high quality products like marmalades, pestos, syrups, etc.
- We also want to process goods we can acquire from regional farming co-operatives
- In winter we will work with recycled materials



With their 10 members, they already built the raised beds and are now waiting to harvest the first vegetables.

MAS-JV Young Co-operative



"The MAS- JV Young Co-operative is aimed at giving services to orphans and vulnerable young people in our community in Limbe, Cameroon. From the beginning, we all had different ideas about starting up a co-operative and the kind of products to produce.

After carrying out a thorough research, we all realised we shared common interests working for vulnerable people. We frequently held meetings to enable the group set up ground rules, not neglecting values and principles of a co-operative, and also plan on how we could raise funds. During such meetings, some group members were assigned to particular roles and others took up the responsibility to identify the children we wanted to work with.

We offer services such as cleaning and car-washing and sell snacks at festivities. For us this is not just work, it is also fun. All income goes into our educational work with young orphans in the community. It is amazing to find the kids excited and look forward to attend subsequent sessions".



Money, Money, Money



Usually, in an enterprise you want to make money. Capitalist companies want to make money for their owners or shareholders, and they also re-invest a part in the company. Many people think that co-operatives are not-for-profit organisations, but that's not always the case. Co-operatives can also make a small profit, but they use this profit to support the community, to share it fairly between workers and customers and to improve their services.

Dealing with money might be one of the trickiest aspects in your co-operative, and needs a lot of attention. After all you can't waste the money of your members and want that the community benefits as much as possible.

Here you find a list of questions and tips that you should carefully go through in order to make the financial planning of your co-operative. Don't just think about rough numbers – be concrete!

Before you start selling your product, you will have:

- **Fixed costs** for setting up the business: What do you need before producing anything/starting to sell anything?
Example: You want to set up a catering service. Before you start, you might need to buy kitchen tools, a bike to deliver the food and take part in a health and safety course.
- **Costs for promotion materials:** How do you want to promote your business before you start selling? Will you have a marketing campaign? Will you distribute flyers?
For the catering service, you might want to have an ad in the local newspaper advertising your co-operative.
- **Production costs:** What materials do you need to produce one unit of your product? How many units do you want to produce? Is the price lower when you produce more?
For the catering service, one unit could be one meal + drink + bringing the meal to the right place. So you need to buy the ingredients, the drinks, packaging and pay for the transport. If you deliver more meals to one place, the costs are lower, because the transport costs can be shared between several units. Also the ingredients are usually cheaper when bought in bulk.

Where does the money come from?

Possibly you need lots of money before you start selling your product, which you will only get back when you start selling. Where can you get this money from? These are some examples:

- From members' contributions
- From friends or family who can borrow you money
- From institutions that give funds to youth projects or new businesses
- From a bank by taking a loan
- Instead of searching for money, you could also try to get the materials for free (ask shops for old materials, ask the local council for a free space)

Whoever gives you the money, for sure they will all want to know what you will do and how they will get their money back. This is why having a clear business plan is very important.



Fixing the price

You have to decide for which price you will sell your product or offer the service.

- Think about what you need the money for: Do you have to pay a salary to workers? Do you want to give members part of the profit? Do you need money for a specific investment or community project?
- The price per unit should be at least as high as the costs per unit (fixed costs and promotion materials divided by number of units you plan to sell, plus production costs per unit). Otherwise you will make a loss.
- If the price is too high, people might not want to buy from you. Conduct market research and check the prices of similar products, or ask people how much they would be willing to pay.

A few typical budgeting documents can help you to calculate how much profit you will make, how much you have to sell and how much external funding you need:

1. A budget sheet

A budget sheet is a simple table listing on one side all the different types of expenditure over a certain period of time (for example during one year), and on the other side all types of income that you have.

For the catering service, it could look like this:

Expenditure in year 1		€	Income in year 1		€
Participation in health and safety course for 4 people x 25 Euro	100		Start-up government subvention		1000
Oven/cooker	1000		200 meals sold for 10 Euros each		2000
Fridge	700		Fridge sponsored by local council		700
Packaging (200 meals sold over one year)	200				
Ingredients (200 meals sold over one year)	800				
Soft drinks (200 meals sold over one year)	80				
Rent of a van for bigger catering occasions (5 times)	300				
Total expenditure	3180		Total income		3700
Profit: 520 Euro in year 1					

You should play around with the budget, see how it changes if you increase or lower the price, if you sell more meals, take cheaper drinks, etc.



2. Profit and Loss

The budget shows your prediction for the whole year. In between you should make a 'profit and loss' that shows exactly where you are in the budget at a certain date. Then you can see that, for example, in the beginning of the year, after buying the oven and before selling any meals, the expenditure is much higher than the income at this point.

3. Cash flow projection

You can also plan how much income and expenditure you will have in each month. This will help you to see when you might need to get a loan for a short period of time or when you can make bigger expenditures.

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Income												
Sales												
Other												
Total												

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Expenditure												
Stock												
Other												
Total												

In the case of the catering service, for example, you need to be aware that you can't buy all your stock at the same time (which might be cheaper if bought in bulk), because you need fresh products that can't be stored for a long time.

Money and the co-operative principles

When it comes to financial management, the co-operative principles must be the basis of everything you do. Otherwise, you are not a co-operative. So remember:

- **Democratic member control:** The members control the co-operative, so they also control its finances. Make sure that you deal with finances very transparently and take time to explain the financial situation and your plans. Only then the members will be able to exercise their right and responsibility to control the co-operative.
- **Member economic participation:** The members of the co-operative democratically control the capital of the organisation. They can also contribute to the capital and receive the profit. You could for example discuss a system of membership fees, or a system where members receive points when they buy from the co-operative. At the end of each year, they could receive a part of the profit depending on how much membership fees they paid or how many points they reached.
- **Autonomy and independence:** Make sure that you stay independent if you receive external funding.
- **Education, training and information:** A part of the profit you make could be used to train the workers in the co-operative, to print information material or organise information events for your members.
- **Co-operation among co-operatives:** Because of this principle, well established co-operatives might be a good place to ask for financial support when you start your business. They might help you with a subvention or a loan, give you some materials and at least can give you lots of advice.



- **Concern for the community:** When it comes to your financial planning, there are many aspects where you can show concern for the community in many ways:
 - You should be aware what products you buy and where you buy them. Your first instinct might be to go for the cheapest option, but stop: if a product is very cheap, it is very likely that it has been produced by people who don't earn a fair salary, work under low security standards and probably the production wasn't very environmentally friendly. Go for Fair Trade products whenever they are available, and buy locally to avoid long unsustainable transport.
 - Sell your product for a price that is fair to the costumers and to the workers.
 - You can use at least part of your profit to support community projects.
 - You can also use part of your profit to make your product more sustainable (buy more sustainable ingredients or materials, change to sustainable energy sources, etc.)





How Ethical Are You?

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 60 minutes

Objective

- To define an ethical policy for the co-operative

Materials

- Paper
- Pens
- Flipchart paper and markers
- Copies of ethical policy questionnaire (appendix)

Step-by-step instructions

1. Remind participants of the seventh co-operative principle, 'concern for the community'. This is something that can easily be forgotten in the busy life of an enterprise.
2. Ask participants to brainstorm briefly with their neighbour: How can an enterprise care for its community? Take notes of their ideas on flipchart paper.
3. Explain that in order not to forget their concern for the community, many co-operatives write down their 'ethical policy'. With this, they give themselves rules on how they can limit their impact on the environment and society, or how to make a positive impact. The ethical policy should be used to guide the co-operative in all its decisions, services and activities.
4. Present some examples of ethical policy; such as:
 - *Using 100% recycled copying paper*
 - *Buying only fairtrade products*
 - *Not accepting funding from non-ethical companies*Ask participants if they can think of other examples.
5. Ask participants to form small groups and to reply to the questions in the ethical policy questionnaire (appendix). This will help them to formulate their own ethical policy afterwards.
6. Back in plenary, compare the outcomes and take notes on a flipchart. If your group is big, you can also divide in subgroups per area.
7. Discuss which guidelines the group wants to give themselves in each area. Make sure that everyone agrees. Are there other areas for which you need guidelines? For the formulation of simple guidelines, you can split into smaller groups.
8. Write the ethical policy on a big poster and put it up in the meeting room, so that the group can remind itself whenever a decision is taken.



Appendix: Ethical policy questionnaire

Customers

- How will you make sure your customers get a good product or service?
- Will the price you charge them be fair?
- What can you tell your customers about how you use energy?
- What information will you give to your customers about the product or service?

Environment (Waste and energy)

- What waste materials will be produced by your product or service?
- Are any of these recyclable?
- How will you get rid of your waste?
- What can you do to reduce the waste that you create?
- Will your customer be left with packaging? Will this be recyclable?
- Will your product or service use much electricity or gas to make it?
- How could you reduce this amount?
- What can you tell your customer about how you use energy?
- How can you tell your customer about how you use energy?

Workers

- How will you make sure that everyone who works in your co-operative is treated fairly?

Suppliers

- Are you using Fairtrade ingredients and materials where possible?
- Will you assess the Ethical Policy of your suppliers before using them?

Community

- What will your co-operative do to help other people in the community?
- How could your co-operative work with other co-operatives?

Based on the Ethical Policy exercise in the Young Co-operatives Action Kit (Key Stage 3/4), by the Co-operative College



Brand your Co-op

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 60 minutes

Objective

- To develop the brand of your co-operative

Materials

- Coloured pencils and papers
- Flipchart paper and markers
- Internet access if possible
- Copies of the pictures in the appendix

Step-by-step instructions

1. First of all (if you have internet access) watch this video on "What is branding?": <http://youtu.be/By9m3UBiRZM>. Ask the group:
 - What do you think about the video?
 - What is branding?
2. Divide in groups. Each receives one of the brand pictures (appendix). In the groups, discuss:
 - What do you feel when looking at this picture?
 - What makes you feel this way? How are the feelings provoked by the company?
 - What do the different elements of the brand tell you? (Its name, slogan, picture...)
3. Come back together and share the results of the discussions.
4. In pairs, the participants should now imagine that their own product is a person with a unique personality. Together they should draw this person, showing their purpose in life and character traits.
5. After 15 minutes, come back together and present the pictures. Discuss:
 - Did everyone think of similar character traits or are there big differences between pictures?
 - Which elements can you agree on?
 - What should people feel and think about your product?
6. Note the answers to the third question on a flipchart paper and make sure that everyone agrees.
7. Now it is time to develop your brand. Put a piece of wallpaper (or several flipchart papers) on a table and ask the participants to draw and write as many ideas for brand names, logos, slogans and name designs as they can think of. They should add to each other's ideas. For example, if someone has an idea for a name, another person can draw how the name should look.
8. When the paper is full or the participants have no new ideas anymore, ask them to go around the paper, look at all the ideas and draw a circle around the ones they like most.
9. Then, look together at the ideas that are most popular. Is there a favourite among them? Can several ideas be combined? Decide together on the brand name, logo and tagline.
10. Propose to the group to draw the elements of their new brand on a poster (or digitally with a computer programme) and start using it in public.

Did you know?

The word 'brand' originally comes from cattle that was marked with a distinctive symbol into the skin, so that the owners could know which their cattle was and which their neighbour's.





Advertise your Co-op

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 120 minutes

Objective

- To develop a marketing strategy for the co-operative

Materials

- Coloured pencils and papers
- Flipchart paper and markers
- Video cameras
- Computers with video editing programs

Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain participants that after creating a brand for the co-operative, they will have to create a marketing strategy to promote their brand. Their task will be to create promotion material for the product.
2. Ask participants to shout out different ways to promote products and note their answers on flipchart paper (e.g. video adverts, posters, facebook pages, adverts in newspapers, radio spots, etc.)
3. Ask them to answer the following questions in small groups of three or four:
 - How do you want people to feel after seeing/listening to your promotion?
 - Who should see/listen to your promotion material?
 - Which information do you want to share with your audience?
4. The groups can then choose one of the promotion types and make an advert for their brand (e.g. a 30 second video clip, a radio spot, a series of posters).
5. Make sure that they first answer the questions, and only then start thinking about their advert. If you have enough time, you can also ask them to first prepare only a rough concept and then come back together to give each other feedback on the concept before starting to produce the advert. Do they all promote the values that are connected to the brand?
Groups making videos should first note exactly what they want to film, and only then start filming. Otherwise the editing will take up too much of your time.
6. When everyone is done, have a celebration to present the different products.
7. You can then distribute the promotion material with the group: copy posters and post them on places that your target audience will notice, upload video adverts to the internet and spread them widely, get in touch with community radios, etc.

Tips for facilitators

Before starting the advertising activity it is important that the group agrees on the brand of their co-operative.



Elevator Pitch

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 60 minutes

Objective

- To be able to explain an idea creatively and concisely

Materials

- Papers and pens
- Access to an elevator (if possible)

Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that often enough the co-operators will need to explain their business idea to possible funders or customers. This exercise will help them to be concise in presenting the main points of their co-operative.
2. Ask participants to close their eyes. Ask them to imagine the following:
You are waiting for the elevator in a big building. suddenly you see a person who represents a funding institution that often supports young entrepreneurs. When the elevator comes, the person goes in together with you. Both of you are going to the top floor of the building. This leaves you two minutes to explain your business idea and evoke their interest... What will you say?
3. Wait two minutes and then ask participants to open their eyes again.
4. Explain that what they have just done in their mind is called an 'elevator pitch': a speech not longer than two minutes that only includes: about 150-225 words, lots of passion and a hook that catches your audience's attention.
5. Ask the participants to form pairs or groups of three and prepare such an elevator pitch. It should include information on:
 - Who are you/ your co-operative?
 - What is your product or service?
 - Why should people buy this from you? What makes it special?
 - To whom are you selling it?
 - How do you expect to make money? Measure the time when you practice. You can't talk more than 2 minutes!
6. After 15 minutes, mix up the groups. They can now present their elevator pitches to each other and give feedback.
7. If possible, invite people who don't know anything about the co-operative yet to practise the pitch with them. If you have access to an elevator, try out the speeches in there. Otherwise do it in a quiet room.
8. Ask for feedback from the audience:
 - What did they learn about your idea?
 - Did you inspire them? How?
 - Are they interested in buying the product? Why (not)?
 - What information they felt was missing?

Debriefing

- How did it feel to do the pitch?
- Can you imagine doing this in real life?
- To whom do you have to explain your idea?
- What do you still have to improve? What is going well already?



Your Business Plan

If you want to start a business, you need to be very clear on what exactly you want to sell, how you want to operate and what you want to achieve. A clear plan will help you to:

- Inform the members of the co-operative
- Gain new members
- Seek support from other people and organisations
- Work effectively towards your aims
- Evaluate if you really achieved what you wanted after a certain time.

Try to answer the following questions as detailed as possible:

1. Summary: This gives an overview of your business in a couple of paragraphs.

2. Your business idea

- What you are going to do in your co-operative?
- Why are you doing it?
- What do you want to achieve?
- How will you make it work?
- Why are you running your business as a co-operative?

3. Sales and marketing

- Why do you think people will buy from you and how do you plan to sell to them.

4. The people

- Who are members of the co-operative?
- What are your strengths?
- How are you going to organise yourselves?
- How will new members be introduced?

5. The organisation

- Where will you be based?
- When and where will you be selling?
- Do you need any equipment?

6. Financial forecasts

This section puts all the words of the previous sections into numbers.

- How much do you want to sell?
- For what price?
- What will your costs be?
- How much profit do you expect to make?

7. Appendix

Attach any documents that are referred to in the main plan, e.g. market research questionnaires, set of rules, etc.



Checking Back

- Introducing Co-operation
- Finding Ideas
- Getting Organised
- Doing Business
- **Checking Back**

By now you have probably set up a new co-operative with your friends and colleagues. You've gone through a long process and already started business.

Now it is time to pause for a moment and evaluate what you have done in the group so far.

On the following pages you will find some exercises and activities that will help you evaluate the process, find out how members are feeling in the co-operative, what improvements can be done and to check if what

you are doing in your co-operative actually follows the co-operative principles and values.

It is a good moment to go back to your '*garden of expectations*' and see if you fulfilled them or not, and to check back if your fears came true or not. You should also take a look at your *Ethical Policy* and check if all decisions have been taken with the ethical policy in mind.

Back to the 80s

When the Finnish Falcons from Nuoret Kotkat found out more about co-operatives, they thought: "hey, doesn't this remind us of what our parents told us about Nuoret Kotkat in the 80s? When groups worked together to ensure every child can come to national and international camps, no matter their financial background? Back then, much more than today the groups fundraised together instead of relying on parents or government grants".

The Co-operACTION group wants to revive this spirit and supports local groups in fundraising efforts, as well as creating an organisation-wide energy and solidarity towards the participation of all in the next international camp. Instead of starting one co-operative enterprise, they will support local groups in becoming 'mini enterprises': by sharing ideas, giving tips and tricks on how to make different craft products that sell well on markets, spreading knowledge on the co-operative values and principles and finally through connecting the groups so that they can learn from each other.





On the Road

Age: 10+
Group Size: 10 or more
Time: 90 minutes

Objectives

- To evaluate the process so far
- To reflect on the team work within the co-operative

Materials

- Pens and paper

Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that the group has gone through a long process, with different experiences, possibly conflicts, but also learning opportunities for individuals and the group. This activity will help them to reflect on this process.
2. Ask participants to draw a spiral showing the 'life of the co-operative project'. The inner end shows the start of the work, the outer end is where they are now. They should also mark important points in the life of the co-operative in the spiral. While drawing, ask them to individually think about the following questions and write down some notes next to the spiral:
 - What did you contribute to the planning of the business?
 - How do you feel about what you have done?
 - Were there things which could have been better planned?
 - How did you feel about working as part of the group? Why?
 - How did you feel when decisions needed to be made? Why?
 - How did you feel about sharing responsibilities? Why?
 - How do you feel now about the project? Why?
3. Meet in small groups and present the spirals to each other. Then discuss in the small groups:
 - How did everyone feel in the process? How are you feeling now?
 - How did you overcome challenges?
 - Were there things which could have been better planned?
 - How were people involved in the work? What responsibilities did you divide? What were different roles? How did you feel in your role?
4. Ask participants to create a human statue (which can move and make some noise) in the small groups, representing a vehicle. The vehicle should show the different roles taken in the process.
5. For each vehicle, ask each participant to explain their role.

Debriefing

- How was it to create the vehicles?
- Did you find a role for everyone?
- Do you feel represented by the statues?
- Which vehicle statue best represents how you feel about the group process? Why?



Boats on the Sea

Age: 12+
Group Size: 10-20
Time: 60 minutes

Objective

- To evaluate the project so far

Materials

- Flipchart paper and markers
- A4 papers for all participants
- Pens and coloured pencils

Preparation

- Draw a sea with two harbours (one on top and one at the bottom) on a flipchart paper.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Show the drawing to participants and explain that the sea between the two harbours stands for the period of time between two moments of the project (beginning and end of the whole project or specific parts of it).
2. Ask participants to design their own boats and to put these boats somewhere in between the two harbours. If the boat is close to the top harbour, they see the progress of the project very positively (and vice versa).
3. Ask them to design other elements of the sea or harbour that symbolise what they think about the project so far (e.g. rocks, wind, islands...) and put them on the drawing.
4. Ask participants to explain where their boat is and why, and what elements influence the position of the boat.

Tips for facilitators

This method can be used in many different ways. You can give participants for example different kinds of boats representing different elements that you want to evaluate (the boat of 'my learning', 'the group process' or 'my own contribution', etc.).

