coLABOURate!

Supported by

EYF
european youth foundation
fonds européen pour la jeunesse

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Additional support provided by

LUSH
FRESH HANDMADE COSMETICS

Network for Social Change

Dr. Pogo

About EYFA

European Youth For Action developed from a tour that was initiated by a Swedish/German group in 1986 to save the old forests in Europe: then named European Youth Forest Action. From these beginnings, EYFA has developed into a network of individuals, grassroots organizations and collectives working to transform local and international communities in their approach to environmental and social, political and economic positions.

EYFA focuses particularly on youth initiated activities and projects. EYFA projects are mainly for young people, giving them the opportunity to act and encouraging them to be active on local and international levels. A special focus is put on providing access for groups to take part in international grassroots movements. EYFA always puts effort into including youth from all corners of the continent, with different social, geographical and cultural backgrounds.

EYFA supports and encourages grassroots projects and initiatives in the following ways:

- organizing exchanges, seminars, trainings, network gatherings, projects and actions

- promoting innovative ways of working in the field of social and environmental activism (i.e. consensus-based decision-making, art and activism, free and open-source software, etc.)

- disseminating call-outs and information on environmental and social justice issues.

- giving advice, knowledge and support in activities such as assisting with fundraising, application writing, planning and implementing projects and networking.

This work is anti-copyright.

Feel free to copy, adapt and distribute it as long as the final work remains anti-copyright.

Introduction

Dear reader,

the resource pack 'CoLABOURate! Young people taking economic exclusion into their own hands,' which you're about to read is the result of three interconnected activities happening throughout 2018 dedicated to the topic of youth and economic inclusion, with the main aim to develop skills, networks and knowledge to create new and reinforce existing participatory structures providing young people with alternatives for their social and economic inclusion.
For us, the topic of economic inclusion is deeply linked to socially sustainable and just societies. We think that it is possible to holistically work towards social and institutional inclusion – for now, by exploring alternative work models. We want to see where we get when we, with different types of experiences in civil society, think outside the box when it comes to meeting our economic/employment needs. We believe in sustainable and participatory alternatives in the worksphere and that these can lead us to a more just society.

The first activity consisted of a number of workshops held throughout the year, which provided basic information and theoretical input related to economic exclusion and identifying discrimination, self-organizing, cooperation, and mutual-aid principles/tactics through non-formal education in multiple locations throughout Europe. Workshops were held e.g. on the topics of founding a cooperative, discrimination in the workplace, exploring self-organization and mutual support networks or alternative economies, to just name a few.

The second activity was an international gathering of women* (the asterisk stands for the inclusion of a variety of identities, e.g. transgender, gender non-conforming people, cis-women – but no cis-men) with the aim to challenge discrimination and build equal employment opportunities for themselves and others. The main aim of this gathering of 20 youth was to empower young women* to promote European labour rights standards and share tactics for their implementation through skillsharing and non-hierarchical learning processes. Its output was a collaboratively-produced video glossary.

The third activity, an international gathering of 31 youth focused on alternatives allowing for young people's social, economical and environmental well-being. Combining participatory workshops with discussion panels its aim was to encourage and support the creation of alternative, self-organized work structures like cooperatives and mutual-aid spaces.

Throughout the whole year we were exploring how self-organized work does not have to be precarious or isolating, but can be community-based, cooperative, and based on mutual-aid principles. We are sharing the results of this process because we find it important to distribute information and tools to be used and improved by as many people as possible. Please feel free to use and share all the materials in this resource pack for what is needed in your community: workshops, groups discussions, presentations or individual reflection. In the end of each chapter we provide you additional sources on each topic for further illustration and discussion.

What will you find in this resource pack

The resource pack is roughly divided into two parts. In the first part you will find a compilation of texts on different topics, related to work and economic inclusion. In the second part you will find tools, like workshops modules, to practically work on the different topics.

We start out with a text on economic exclusion and inclusion as a contribution from our workshop series. In the second part of the resource pack, you will find several workshop modules from this activity. Our international gathering of women* contributed two texts to this compilation, one on European labour rights and one on a gender perspective on alternatively organizing the workspace. We added the alphabet from the video glossary which was produced in this activity to this resource pack, because we think it gives some pretty good food for thoughts.

Our international meeting on cooperatives makes the biggest contribution to this resource pack. You will find chapters on cooperatives, group dynamics and conflict, alternative market economy and business plans, burnout and digital security. Many of these chapters are accompanied by workshop modules or other materials which you can find in the second part of the resource pack.

How to use the resource pack depends on what your aim is: You can read through the whole pack from the beginning to the end or work with just the chapters that are especially interesting for your thematic focus. We encourage youth NGOs in all sectors to take time to reflect on economic inclusion and how it intersects with the work they do, adapting workshop modules from this resource pack for either internal (among staff and volunteers) or external outreach work.

We hope that you will enjoy reading and find some helpful information and non-formal educational materials to spread the word! Please direct feedback, recommendations and critique to: eyfa@eyfa.org

Contents

About EYFA 3

Introduction 4

What will you find in this resource pack 6

Section I: The Path to Economic Inclusion 10

On the Topic of Economic Justice and Inclusion 11

European Labour Rights 13

1. Know your rights! 13

2. Young People's Access to Employment 14

3. Practical measures for improving access to social rights, especially concerning employment and occupation 14

Unite! A Glossary on Gender-based Economic Exclusion 17

Capitalism 17

Empathy 17

Feminism 18

Insecurity 18

Knowledge 18

Labor 19

Post gender society 19

Self exploitation 19

Transition 19

A Gender Perspective on Alternatively Organizing in the Workplace 20

Mutual Aid 22

Workers' Cooperatives as a Participatory Alternative 24

What is a workers' coop? 24

Creating meaningful employment and building a fairer society 25
Cooperatives are more stable and less likely to fail as a business 26
Common difficulties for coops 26
Talking about Group Dynamics and Conflicts 27
Understanding conflict 29
Tools to deal with conflict 31
Good communication and listening skills 31
Assertiveness 31
"I" statements 32
Consensus Decision Making 33
Conditions for consensus 33
Implementing consensus decision making 34
The Business Plan 36
Market research 39
Finance plan 41
FairCoin and FairCoop on Alternative Economies 43
FairCoin 43
Cooperative Values: Profit vs Ideology 45
Identifying and Avoiding Burnout 46
What is burnout? 46
What are the symptoms? 47
Strategies to prevent/deal with burnout 47
Secure Communication and Digital Privacy 49
Secure and anonymous web browsing 49
Email communication and encryption 50
Encrypted messaging 50
Passwords 50

Section II: Skillsharing Modules and Resources 52
COOPERATION AT WORK 53
WORKSHOP: Youth Rethinking Work 65
Workshop: Collective organizing, Economical Disadvantage 70
ANTI-OPPRESSIVE COOPERATION AT WORK 72
DAY1 73
DAY2 84
Workshop module
Group Dynamics – Understanding Conflicts 92
CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING PROCESS 95
COOPERATIVE VALUES: PROFIT Vs. IDEOLOGY 104
Notes 109

Section I: The Path to Economic Inclusion

On the Topic of Economic Justice and Inclusion

We write this resource pack for people concerned already with environmental and/or social justice. And some of them might be asking themselves: Why the big focus on economic topics here? Is there really such a thing as 'economic justice'?

DEFINITION of Economic Justice (from Investopedia, online financial literacy dictionary):

Economic justice is a component of social justice. It is a set of moral principles for building economic institutions, the ultimate goal of which is to create an opportunity for each person to create a sufficient material foundation upon which to have a dignified, productive, and creative life.Our approach to economic justice is multifaceted. And we continue to encourage broad coalitions and loud demonstrations taking a moral stance for economic justice to actually be put into action. But what we want to point to in this guide is how to approach it through locally identifying social and economic barriers facing underemployed or economically exploited/excluded youth and collectively devising ways of challenging discrimination and developing inclusive self-organized labour structures.

Looking at what are these economic barriers is what we are doing when we are talking about economic exclusion. To better understand how it works, consider these four main dimensions of economic exclusion, all of which affect youth (those affecting by other intersecting discriminations more so):

1. Labor market exclusion - makes it hard to get a job because of discrimination or the changing structure of the labor market. Exclusion from the labor market is likely to increase in the future as employers in the growing knowledge economy seek skills that vulnerable workers do not have.

2. Poor-quality jobs - have stagnant low-end wages and unpredictable hours, lack job security, and offer limited-to-no-career pathways. Poor job quality is widespread and growing across high-income countries, and globalization and technological advances may further erode wages and job security at the bottom.

3. Economic vulnerability - is exposure to financial risks. Economically vulnerable households lack assets to protect themselves from financial emergencies, such as a job loss or a health crisis. And the social safety nets that should support these households are inadequate or have weakened in recent years.

4. Isolation from opportunity - occurs when low-income people and minorities live in neighborhoods without access to jobs, good schools, health care facilities, and public spaces. Economic segregation, where the rich and poor increasingly live in separate neighborhoods, appears to be on the rise in most large cities. [citation: Greene, Solomon, Rolf Pendall, Molly M. Scott, Serena Lei, "Open Cities: From Economic Exclusion to Urban Inclusion," 8 June 2016, Urban Institute. p. 2.]

Youth's participatory inclusion has become so pressing in the face of neo-liberal aspects of the labour market and rising austerity. A profound deficiency of workplaces, insufficient salaries, freelancing as a precarious norm or lack of social benefits are only examples of the factors that create unstable and unsustainable economic conditions for youth workers. Youth are disproportionately faced with unpaid internships or short-term contracts. We observe youth workers facing dual pressures to constantly adjust their skills to fit the labour market's demand, while facing structural barriers (e.g. rising tuition costs) of formal education, which have prompted us to outline strategies for enhanced community-based self-educating and skill-sharing. Included in order to lay the groundwork for equal employment, we share several workshop modules that delve into both analysing barriers and devising strategies to overcome exclusion-based challenges. These modules were developed in collaboration with experienced trainers and respond to the needs of precarious youth workers in different parts of Europe.

In the second part of this resource pack you will find the following workshop modules:

1. Cooperation at Work

2. Youth Rethinking Work

3. Collective Organizing, Economical Disadvantage

4. Anti-oppression in Cooperative Work

European Labour Rights

Refer to these recommendations and rights in advocating for your economic rights and access at the national or European level.

1. Know your rights!

Here are the rights outlined by the European Social Charter about employment:

- freedom to work (prohibition of forced labour; prohibition of the employment of children under the age of 15; special working conditions between 15 and 18 years of age; the right to earn one's living in an occupation freely entered upon);

- fair working conditions (an economic and social policy designed to ensure full employment; access to work for people with disabilities; fair working conditions as regards pay and working hours; protection in case of dismissal; protection from sexual and psychological harassment);

- collective rights (freedom to form trade unions and for employers' organizations to defend economic and social interests; individual freedom to decide whether or not to join them; promotion of joint consultation, collective bargaining, conciliation and voluntary arbitration; the right to strike).

- Equal treatment and equal opportunities in employment

and those particularly protecting youth workers:

- with some exceptions for "light work" the minimum age of employment is 15 years, while it is 18 years for occupations deemed dangerous or unhealthy; those working in such occupations are to be subject to regular medical controls;

- children and young persons still in full-time, compulsory education shall not be employed in any work that interferes with their education;

- work should not interfere with the compulsory education of young people or deprive them of the full benefits of education;

- young workers and apprentices are entitled to a fair wage and allowances and to four weeks annual holiday with pay;

- member states are required to ensure special protection against both physical and moral dangers to which children and young people might be exposed, particularly those resulting directly or indirectly from their work, including all forms of exploitation, human trafficking and the misuse of information technology.

2. Young People's Access to Employment

According to the Recommendations adopted by the Council of Europe on Young People's Access to Rights (Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)7), the governments of the member States are encouraged to improve young people's access to right by:

establishing or developing youth policies at all levels to promote and facilitate all young people's access to rights more effectively, with special emphasis on [...] the difficulties encountered by many young people, on leaving education, to secure stable and meaningful employment with fair, just and favourable conditions of work or to obtain quality internships.

3. Practical measures for improving access to social rights, especially concerning employment and occupation

Take action, speak out.

Where to file complaints or seek support:

GERMANY
The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency provides you with confidential counselling free of charge. It can also help you to find a counselling centre near you: +49 (0) 30 18555-1855
Mon 1 p.m.–3 p.m., Wed 9 a.m.–12 p.m. and Fri, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
or use the contact form available on the Internet: www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/beratung You can find an anti-discrimination counselling centre near you by using the counselling centre search option: www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/beratungsstellen

ITALY
National Office against Racial Discrimination
Postal address: Largo Chigi 19, 00187 Rome, Italy
Website: www.unar.it
Helpline: +39 800 90 10 10

SERBIA
Commission for the Protection of Equality
http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/
+381 11 243 80 20, +381 11 243 64 64,Fax: +381 11 243 81 84
E-mail address: poverenik@ravnopravnost.gov.rs
Postal address:
Повереник за заштиту равноправности
Булевар краља Александра 84
11000 Београд
Канцеларија за пријем грађана

HUNGARY
Hungarian Equal Treatment Authority
http://www.egyenlobanasmod.hu/hu
H-1013 Budapest, Krisztina krt. 39/B, open 9-16:00 on working days.
Phone:(36-1) 795-2975
Fax:(36-1) 795-0760
Post-office box: 1539 Budapest, Pf. 672
E-mail: ebh@egyenlobanasmod.hu

ROMANIA
National Council for Combating Discrimination
http://www.cncd.org.ro/
Email address: support@cncd.org.ro
Phone:0040213126578/79

GREECE
Greek Ombudsman
http://www.synigoros.gr/
Email address: press@synigoros.gr
Helpline: +30 213 1306 600
Postal address: 17 Halkokondyli St. 104 32 Athens, Greece

POLAND
Commissioner for Human Rights
http://www.rpo.gov.pl/
Email address: biurorzecznika@brpo.gov.pl

Helpline: 800 676 676
Postal address: al. Solidarności 77 00-090 WARSZAWA POLAND
complaints can also be filed via the online contact form here: https://www.rpo.gov.pl/wniosek/index.php?jezyk=1&poz=1

Further Reading

- Council of Europe (2010), Strengthening social cohesion – Improving the situation of low-income workers. Empowerment of people experiencing extreme poverty, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.
- Council of Europe (2010), Youth employment and the future of work (Youth knowledge No.10), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.
- Guide de la Recommandation CM/Rec(2015)3 du Comité des Ministres du Conseil de l'Europe aux Etats membres sur l'accès des jeunes des quartiers défavorisés aux droits sociaux

Unite! A Glossary on Gender-based Economic Exclusion

During 2018's youth exchange "Unite! Young women* exploring labour rights" participants produced a complex and thoughtful video glossary connecting their experiences facing exclusion on the labour market. The video can be found (in Russian, Polish, Spanish, German, and English) on EYFA's vimeo channel: https://vimeo.com/user90137588

We started by defining some of the words connected to the economy and our experiences surviving in it. Then we collaboratively wrote poems inspired by the content of our workshops. You'll find some of the terms from the glossary defined here.

Capitalism

"Capitalism is a system which creates and keeps social inequalities.

Exploits the bodies of people, animals, planets with one purpose - to achieve the profits of a very narrow group of people, mostly white, fit, heterosexual men from the upper class.Generates needs and creates a false promise of their fulfillment.It pushes the ideology of success underestimating weakness, emotions, traumas, unwillingness to make a career or earn money. Capitalist ideology permeates all spheres of life. Supported by institutions such as the state or family, creates illusions of the lack of other possibilities. But after all, strategies and practices of resistance exist. And I know they work."

Empathy

"It is very important for me that our sewing cooperative project, its participants and I are interesting to others. That there are other projects or organizations, people who share ideas.

Ideas that the world can be built differently than in a capitalistic way. The idea of horizontality, non-hierarchy, consensus. Idea of conscious consumption, compassion, understanding, listening to problems, feelings, and fatigue.

It is important to not depreciate our experience. To see us not as a part of the system, not as part that fights the system, not activists who are always ready to go out and fight, but people, personalities. For me, empathy is the foundation of solidarity."

Feminism

"Feminism gives me the tools to perceive, analyse and resistance on behalf of the patriarchate, which is one of the most common and severe systems of oppression in my everyday life.

These different feminist theories gives me self confidence and empowerment, reclaim power and understanding of how to support and take care of myself and other people.

I am a feminist and I can not imagine that it could be different."

Insecurity

"Insecurity - it should be on E because it is Everyday for many of us.

When you do not fit into the picture that dominates in society, it is difficult to feel confident on the street, at work, at school or anywhere among people. It is also more difficult to have social privileges, such as economic stability. We also bring this obtained insecurity into safer spaces such as these workshops. The difference is that here we can risk and show this insecurity openly. Share it, and sometimes meet with understanding, empathy, smile of understanding or a warm hug."

Knowledge

"When I participate in the conversations at the table, I understand how much I miss them.

But I do not want to feel that the experience and knowledge of other people are more valuable than mine. I want to feel that listening to others is as valuable as telling your own stories.

That I have privileges to make discoveries and be surprised by them."

Labor

“Work is a basic human activity in which people extract from nature what they need to survive and produce the things they need to live their lives. In today’s world, we do not produce only for our own needs, but in order to sell something to the market. So in the end we can get only this, what is in the market.”

Post gender society

“Gender is boring. It is a problem. In the begin we study grammar of the foreign language then we confront with the person, people.”

Self exploitation

“I believe I should get paid for my work, but somehow I don’t mind do it for free for the sake of high course. It is painful to call it self exploitation, but that’s there.”

Transition

“Recently, I use the word transgression, because transition is a passing from one place to another and transgression is going beyond an area but without a mandatory destination.

The experience of transgression can be extremely diverse and affect different areas of life.

My experience is the so-called “gender correction” a procedure that, not only in Poland, is very strict and is a narrow path from gender A to gender Z.

There are people who can fit it, but generally it has nothing to do with the diversity I see around me.

This is one of the areas in which medicine and law not caring about you but control you.

We need a change here, and the change often starts in the language.”

A Gender Perspective on Alternatively Organizing in the Workplace

The labour market is the main field responsible for the exclusion, poverty and precarity of women* ((including a variety of identities, e.g. transgender, gender non-conforming people, cis-women), with their limited access to key positions and workplaces, lower salaries and gender/sexuality-based discrimination in the workplace. We consider gender as one of the most important factors while discussing work and economic well-being. Women* are often pushed by the neo-liberal economic system to cope with their exclusion in isolation, feeling inadequate due to their lack of education or competences.

In order to get at some key points, we started by asking ourselves:

- How is gender-based economical exclusion perpetuated by systemic obstacles?
- Do we have access to education on an equal level?
- Who does get the profit from it and why?

Today gender pay differences are much better explained by occupation than by education. Women* are more likely to choose an occupation or job with flexible hours so that they can be available for UNPAID care work. This relates to a societal expectation that such care work should fall into the responsibility of women*. This societal belief, and the praxis that directly follows it, stands as a huge systemic obstacle perpetuating gender-based economic exclusion.

Access to education for people of all genders has increased and is not anymore a crucial factor in the gender wage gap in Europe. Educational interventions on the topic of patriarchy, however, and its toxic effects on much of society/ecology is somehow still lacking in most areas. What else would we like to address in terms of education? It's often debilitating to try to study certain technical skills in environments full of bossy and know-it-all men who incessantly mansplain. This calls for more educational opportunities that cultivate safer spaces.

The profit from the majority of occupations is preserved for multinational corporations who share little with the workers involved in service or production. Further, the community gains very little from corporate involvement since the trend to outsource became so hot as early as the 1990s. The profit from community-based collectively-owned workers cooperatives, however, tends to be more equitably distributed.

What then does this alternative organizing look like ideally?

- Workers own and operate their own small-scale production
- Production runs as ecologically, reducing harm to other human and non-human animals, as possible
- Dismantling patriarchal and oppressive structures is a commonly addressed topic in the collective
- Care work is shared equally among the members of the workers cooperative (meaning childcare can take place on sight at the workplace with a rotation of who takes care or other alternatives)

Mutual Aid

Mutual aid is an ethos of interconnectedness and a practice of working together to fulfill the diverse needs of all members of our community. The spirit and principles of mutual aid are historically rooted in opposition to the 'survival of the fittest' mantra of social Darwinism (a ideology that underlies much of modern-day neo-liberal capitalist relationships). Those theorists and practitioners of mutual aid found benefit for all (those involved in the interaction and society in general) in NOT COMPETING until the death to achieve greatness and uniqueness, but instead COOPERATING collectively to adapt and grow together.

A thriving example of mutual aid in practice, the Mutual Aid Space in Milano, Italy hosted our 2018 cooperatives gathering:

Spazio di Mutuo Soccorso - SMS - (Mutual-Aid Space) is a self-organized multi-purpose experience based in two occupied buildings in the western semi-periphery in Milan. It is inspired by the workers' experiences of Mutual-Aid. This experience aims to meet, in the absence of adequate social measures, the housing needs of a working class district with a high presence of migrants. On the one hand, it provides apartments in the two occupied buildings after a close examination of each situation carried out by the housing help desk (also evaluating people's commitment to the cooperative management of the space, that is their engagement in one of various organizational activities), on the other hand it ensures a temporary accommodation to those who are on a waiting list for social housing.

The activities carried out by SMS aim to provide precarious workers and migrants with services and resources in order to help them tackle the crisis. SMS runs different projects including the community-based gym "Hurricane", a bicycle repair workshop, the C_Rise project – a flea market promoting the exchange and reuse of products, an art workshop, the GASP – an ethical purchasing group, the People's University whose core is the school of languages "Abba" which issues the official certification of Italian as a foreign language (CILS), a photography and videomaker workshop. It also hosts an after-school child care space called "C'era due volte", the headquarters of Asia – a trade union association for tenants which is affiliated to the grassroots union USB, and a research and action group involved in the redevelopment of Piazza Stuparich, a square in front of SMS.

The financial sustainability of the space is based on the proceeds from various activities and fundraising events (dinners, concerts). Some initiatives, like the C_Rise project, foster the articulation of different economic practices underpinning a system based on use value, thus a payments system based on barter. The most innovative aspect lies on the development of strong synergies and integration between the different activities carried out in SMS which, therefore, presents itself as an actual self-organized bottom-up welfare system that is able to meet a wide spectrum of needs related to housing, training, food, culture, and leisure time. Some people who are involved in SMS are also able to generate income from the activities they carry out. SMS created strong bonds with the neighbourhood thanks also to the neighbours committee of San Siro. The reproducibility of SMS depends on the prior existence of a well-structured organization able to be the driving force, and the ability to develop volunteer work thanks to the militant attitude of the activists involved in it.

this description can be found here: http://pieproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PIE_D2.1.pdf

Workers' Cooperatives as a Participatory Alternative

from How to Set up a Workers' Coop published by Radical Routes Ltd.

What is a workers' coop?

A coop is a group of people that organize together, as equals, to help everyone in the group. A workers' coop could be defined as a business owned and managed collectively by its workers for their mutual benefit. It's organized democratically and fairly by (and only by) its members.

The International Cooperative Alliance defines a coop as:

"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".

Workers' coops differ from consumer coops, in that they are set up to benefit workers, not consumers. They're also different from employee-owned businesses since these aren't necessarily democratic and don't follow the cooperative principles and values. As you can see from the Cooperative Principles and Values, coops are by their very nature more than just about making money. In fact many within the coop movement feel that the economics are purely a means to an end, and the socially useful and educational aspects of our coops come first.

All coops follow the seven internationally agreed principles of cooperation and a set of cooperative values.

Put simply, these are:

1. Coop membership is open and voluntary.

2. Coops are controlled only by their members, who each have equal control.

3. Members have a fair stake in the coop. Investment does not give control and only gives a small return.

4. Coops are autonomous and independent self-help organizations.

5. Coops educate and train their members so they can contribute to the coop. We also inform the public about the benefits of cooperation.

6. Cooperation among coops benefits members and the wider coop movement.

7. Coops act with concern for the community.

Coops are also guided by the cooperative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity, along with the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Creating meaningful employment and building a fairer society

Workers' coops are not only a great way to reclaim control over our working lives, but can also provide us with meaningful work. We can decide to employ ourselves doing work that is useful in itself, like producing renewable energy or refurbishing unwanted bicycles, rather than living dead time in a call-center, supermarket or corporate office.

Working for a coop means that making money isn't the bottom line: we can integrate our political ethics into coop decisions and channel any profits into our environment and communities. Cooperation doesn't just stop with how we relate to our workmates. Even in this capitalist system, we don't have to compete with other businesses, coops, individuals and community groups – we can work together along egalitarian, non-hierarchical lines. We can talk to other people doing similar things and work out how to cooperate, not compete. For example, growers in an area can co-ordinate their planting plans so that they each have the same vegetables ready for harvesting at different times, instead of getting a glut where no-one can sell at a fair price. Or a coop can support the community with cheap resources like venues and vehicles as well as helping new coops set up.

Working for a coop allows us to make a difference, here and now, by building better ways of making a living and better ways of working together. It isn't easy, but it is a step in the right direction, and gives us a chance to learn the skills in taking collective responsibility to build a better world.

Cooperatives are more stable and less likely to fail as a business

The failure rate among coops is actually very low, a tiny fraction of the 80% of new capitalist businesses that either give up or fail financially within the first couple of years of trading. Reasons for success include the greater support that a group can give each other, the wider pool of skills and experience they can draw upon, and help from other cooperative enterprises and support organizations. The social and educational aims of the coop can produce a great commitment from workers and more support from the wider community.

Common difficulties for coops

Of course it's not always easy to work in a coop. Most coops will experience problems over the course of their existence. For example, democratic decision-making can take up a lot of time and energy unless you work out a good decision-making process and learn how to use it efficiently [see 'Consensus Decision Making' in section II]. Group dynamics are sometimes tricky to handle – running a business has very different demands from friendship and can cause problems you might not foresee [see 'Group Dynamics and Conflict' in section II]. Membership is theoretically open to all employees, but in reality you may have a need for short-term or casual staff, or find that some employees don't want the responsibility of membership.

Coops can struggle to pay their workers a sustainable wage, and members run the risk of replacing exploitation by a boss with a mentality of self-exploitation. In addition, surviving in a capitalist market whilst sticking by our ethical and political beliefs can be a real struggle [see 'Cooperative Values: Profit vs Ideology' in section II], not just economically but also personally . Sometimes difficult compromises have to be made, and this can be emotionally challenging [see 'Identifying and Avoiding Burn Out' in section II].

On top of all this there are the problems associated with making a business work: learning the skills, making money, keeping going...
[see 'The Business plan']

We hope that this resource pack will provide you with some of the knowledge you need to start your coop on a long, successful and largely enjoyable journey. [For more detailed accounts of the steps involved in starting a coop, visit radicalroutes.co.uk to find the 2015 full-version of this detailed guide to starting and operating your own workers' cooperative]

Talking about Group Dynamics and Conflicts

Conflicts are as normal to pop-up in cooperatives as in any other group of people. People involved in the coop will probably have different priorities and needs and especially the beginning of setting up the business will be very stressful for everyone. But you will also have the advantage of doing things as good as possible from the start, so it's always worth to look into the topic of conflict and maybe even find ways to prevent some of them!

In general, it's important to not see conflict as something negative and bad, something aggressive or something to be afraid of. More objectively, conflict can also be seen as incompatible needs, ways of working, expectations and ways of communicating. Like this, we can be able to see conflict as an opportunity to make situations better for everyone involved in them. Although it's sometimes tricky, we should do our best in addressing potential conflicts as early as possible to find appropriate and cooperative solutions for them.

If we want to spot potential conflicts early, we have to raise our awareness towards the differences people might have and stop to think that everyone has the same needs and expectations as we do. We have to be open to hear and take serious what other members say and need, realizing that there are different ways to approach an issue. This can be done by for example spending some time together outside of the work content, let it be the lunch break (where you do not talk about work!) or a weekend retreat.

In the very beginning, where many topics and tasks might be pressing, don't forget to take your time to find out what your common values are. A common understanding of mutual-aid, solidarity and cooperativism can help to prevent surprises in the future.

In general, a good meeting culture is one of the key elements for a healthy communication. Hold your meetings at a comfortable time in a comfortable space and don't rush through them. Take time for a round of feelings in the beginning or a peer-to-peer supervision afterwards. Learning facilitation skills and rotating in facilitation and minute taking is useful to have prepared meetings, keep track of what you're doing and counteracts frustration at an early stage.

To prevent conflict, it can also be useful to talk through theoretical conflict scenarios in the group beforehand. You will be surprised which differences can appear in an exercise like that! Brainstorm together about differences in needs of the coop members and identify topics for potential conflicts which could arise from them: meeting culture, informal hierarchies, talking habits, working culture, task division, work-life-balance and so on. Within these topics it is also useful to reflect on the topic of power and privilege and the different positions which are represented within the coop: Can you identify mainstreams and margins? What does the mainstream represented looks like and how can you make sure that the margins are being taken into account?

Understanding conflict

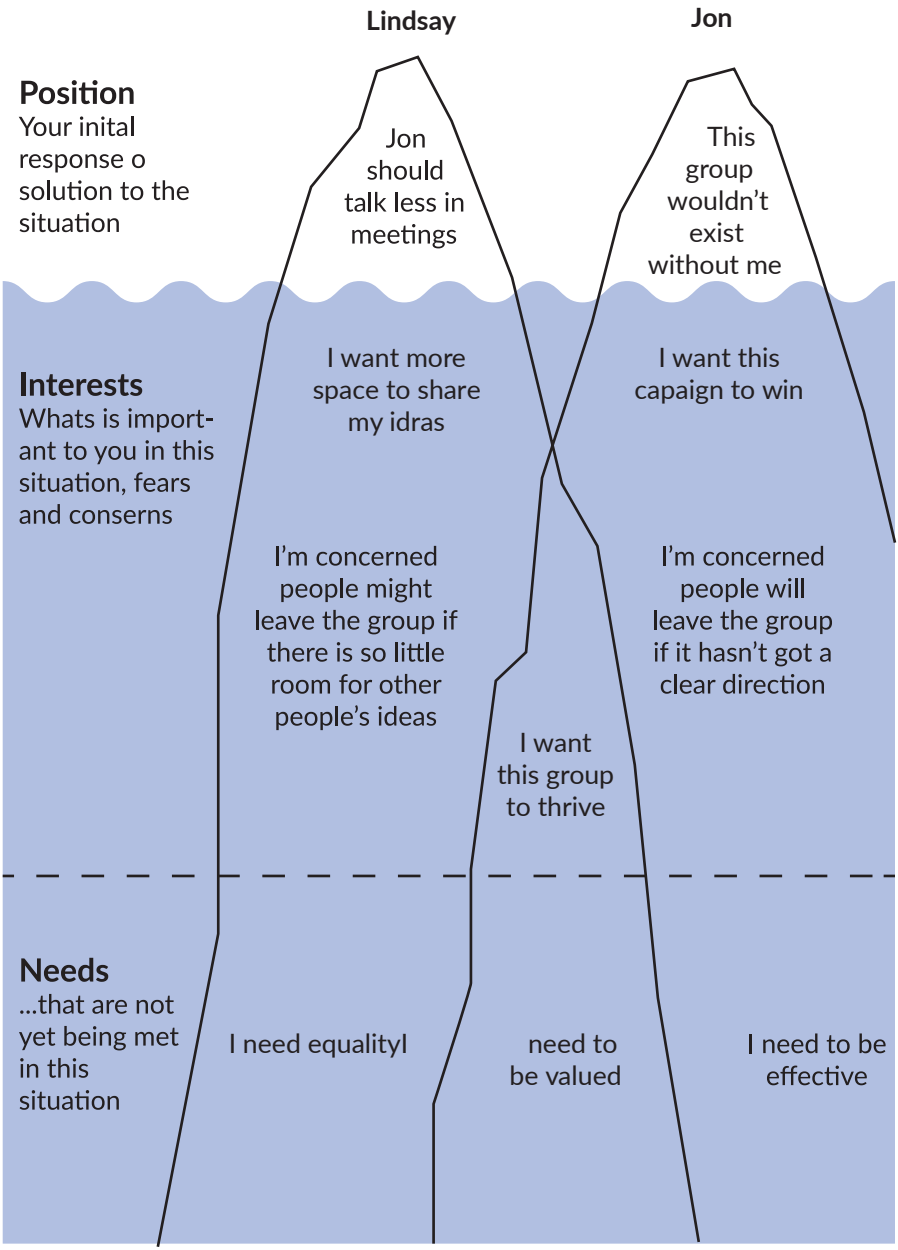
The iceberg exercise is a very helpful tool to understand conflict. The idea of it is basically, that only a small part of what the conflict consists of, is visible – like the tip of the iceberg – and the way bigger part stays unseen, under water. The group's job is now, to discover the unseen parts in order to understand conflict better.

Note:
It can be helpful to involve external people at any time. Some inequalities and certain group dynamics are hard to grasp if you are part of a group and can be easier visible for people coming in from the outside. Don't hesitate to involve external support at an early stage of group formation!

In the iceberg model, the visible tip are the (in a conflict opposing) positions of two or more persons. Underneath the surface, the interests are lying, what's important to these people, concerns and fears about the issue. If we are digging deeper, we will discover the needs of people, which are not yet being met in the situation of conflict. Way too often, people stay on the very first layer of the conflict, the positions, and don't try to understand each other's needs – something which is indispensable for conflict resolution.

An example of an iceberg workshop on group dynamics is added to the second part of the resource pack.

Conflict triangles



Tools to deal with conflict

There are various resources on the internet which will give you good advice how to cope with conflicts in your cooperative or group. It is important to take conflict serious when it evolves and to work together to overcome it. You could also think about involving external people, e.g. for mediation at any stage of a potential conflict. Having someone from outside look at the dispute, can have already a clarifying effect on the whole situation.

If you want to start within your group to work on ways how to deal with conflict, here are some guidelines what you could improve:

Good communication and listening skills

Empathizing with people and trying to see things from their perspectives are key elements of good communication and can be very helpful especially in an early stage of conflict. Empathy helps us to be more connected to the other people in our group and to broaden our perspective as well as respecting differences in opinions and ways of thinking and working.

To improve our empathy, it is important to practice some listening skills, like active listening. Active listening is about nothing else but listening and that's easier said than done! With active listening we are trying to only focus on listening to what other people are saying, and not to think about e.g. our own answer to it. Like this it allows us to understand the core message of another person better. Some tips for active listening and a short exercise you find here: https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/conflictbooklet.pdf

Assertiveness

If we act assertive, we are clear about our feelings and needs and the steps it needs for them to be met, without being respectless towards other peoples feelings and needs. We know our own mind and we can stand up for it, without pushing others around or being rude. Six steps on how to getting someone to change difficult behaviour in an assertive way are to be found here: https://www.uk.coop/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/conflict_booklet_1_web.pdf

"I" statements

"I" statements help us to avoid blaming other people if we feel strongly about their behaviour. This prevents the other person acting in a defensive way and getting into a downward spiral of reciprocal blaming. In an "I" statement we try to keep the focus on our own feelings instead of focusing on what the other person did. Four steps to an "I" statement and the difference between a blame statement and an "I" statement can be found here: https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/conflictbooklet.pdf

We think that it is important to constantly exercise certain communication skills to prevent conflict and to create a more healthy and effective working and meeting environment in your group.

Resources:

- https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/conflictbooklet.pdf
- https://www.uk.coop/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/conflict_booklet_1_web.pdf
- https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/workersco-ops.pdf

Consensus Decision Making

Many cooperatives choose to make decisions by consensus. The advantage of consensus decision making is simply, that in the decision making process everyone's opinion, ideas and concerns are heard until the group comes up with a decision with which everyone involved is happy or can at least live with. Since in the workplace you will take decisions which have a high impact on your life, it sounds logical to implement consensus decision making, where everyone has the opportunity to block a decision that they are really worried about. Other than that, consensus decision making is also a great tool for other groups apart from our workplaces.

Conditions for consensus

There are several conditions which enable the process of consensus decision making. Having a common goal is crucial, as well as a group willing to work towards this common goal. This should be worked out in the very beginning of the group process. The same goes for the consensus process itself: everyone in the group should stand behind the decision to make decisions in consensus, or at least giving it a try. This means for each individual to commit to honesty and actively listening to what others have to say. Also being ready for position shifting/compromising is helpful.

To be able to talk honestly and openly about what we feel and want and what we don't want, it requires openness and trust. Only if everyone is able to speak open and honestly about their opinion, the group is able to find a solution that takes into account everyone's position.

As you can probably imagine, these processes and the preparation for them takes time. It's very important to not rush through the process and take as much time as it needs to come to decisions. Especially in the process of preparation and decision for the implementation of consensus decision it is crucial to make sure to have a clear process that everyone understands and actively agrees to. Active participation, in both listening and expressing our positions, is another key element of consensus decision making.

Implementing consensus decision making

It makes sense to facilitate meetings. The facilitator of a meeting keeps track on the tasks that have to be done in a meeting, among others taking decisions, but also to make sure people are not dominating the discussion or ask for clarification if someone isn't following, call for a break and in general has an overview over the meeting situation. The facilitator doesn't have more power than others in the meeting, and should not get involved into the discussions. Sometimes the facilitator will prepare the meeting in advance and propose an agenda.

The decision making process starts with opening up the discussion about a specific topic. People bring in their different points of views, perspectives and ideas. The discussion process is the creative and probably the longest part of the process and sometimes it might be difficult. But sticking to some simple agreements, like listening to each other and taking each other serious, helps to come to a fruitful outcome. In the end the groups should formulate one or more proposals, that can be decided upon.

Within the decision making process there are several ways to express agreement or disagreement, once a proposal is on the table:
Obviously there is the option of agreeing to the proposal. If people are not really happy with the proposal, but are fine with the group going ahead implementing it, they can let the group know that they have reservations. There is the possibility to formulate a stand-aside, if people are objecting but not blocking the proposal. A stand-aside can have the reason of disagreeing with the proposal, or just being unable to support the proposal because of the lack of time/energy. If there are several stand-asides the group might re-work the proposal.

The strongest disagreement with a proposal is a block or veto. It means, that someone could not live with the decision taken and thus stops the proposal from going ahead. The group will have to work out a new proposal. A block/veto is a very strong tool and has to be handled very responsible. In an ideal process of consensus decision making, a block wouldn't occur, cause any concerns would have been discussed already at an earlier stage of the process. Anyway, sometimes it is the last resort to use for people who weren't heard or unable to express their wishes in the earlier stages.

The flowchart on the next page made by seeds for change outlines common stages of how a decision making process can look like and in the second part of this resource pack you'll find a workshop module on the topic of consensus decision making.

Resources:

- https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/workersco-ops.pdf
- https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortconsensus

Consensus Flowchart

Step 1: Introduce and clarify the issue(s) to be decided
Share relevant info. What are the key questions?

↓

Step 2: Explore the issue and look for ideas.
1. Gather initial thoughts and reactions. What are the issues and people's concerns?
2. Collect ideas for solving the problem – write them down.
3. Have a broad ranging discussion and debate the ideas. What are the pros and cons? Start thinking about solutions to people's concerns. Eliminate some ideas, short list others.

↓

Step 3: Look for emerging proposals
Look for a proposal that weaves together the best elements of the ideas discussed. Look for a solution that addresses people's key concerns.

↓

Step 4: Discuss, clarify and amend your proposal
Ensure that any remaining concerns are heard and that everyone has a chance to contribute. Look for amendments that make the proposal even more acceptable to the group.

↓

Step 5: Test for agreement
Do you have agreement? Check for the following:
Blocks: I have a fundamental disagreement with the core of the proposal that has not been resolved. We need to look for a new proposal.
Stand asides: I can't support this proposal because ... But I don't want to stop the group, so I'll let the decision happen without me.
Reservations: I have some reservations but am willing to let the proposal pass.
Agreement: I support the proposal and am willing to implement it.
Consensus: No blocks, not too many stand asides or reservations? Active agreement? Then we have a decision!

↓

Step 6:Implement the decision
Who, when, how? Action point the tasks and set deadlines.

The Business Plan

It might sound exhausting and mainstream to write a business plan, but it's highly recommended, also for cooperatives, to do it. Although you are setting up an alternative work model, you will still be acting within the market, and it's good to be prepared. Additionally, a business plan will help you to sort out certain aspects of your cooperative, e.g. your values and your key activities, your costs and your resources. Having such a plan gives you an overview over your cooperative with it's different aspects and is helpful for banks and funders.

The business plan is one of the core documents of your cooperative, so everyone should be involved in its creation. Take your time to put it together, discuss disagreements and find solutions for them. Everyone in the coop should agree to all the decisions taken. A business plan should be set up by a new cooperative, but it is also a good exercise for an already existing cooperative.

It's useful to look at the business plan of other cooperatives to get inspired and there are plenty of models and templates on the internet. A good model we found is the Canvas model, which describes a coop's value proposition, infrastructure, customers, and finances:

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">Key partners
Who are your key partners/suppliers?
What are the motivations for the partnerships?</td>
<td>Key activities
What key activities does your value proposition require?
What activities are important the most in distribution channels, customer relationships,</td>
<td rowspan="2">Value Proposition
What core value do you deliver to the customer?
Which customer needs are you satisfying?</td>
<td>Customer Relationship
What relationship that the target customer expects you to establish?
How can you integrate that into your business in terms of cost and format?</td>
<td rowspan="2">Customer Segment
Which classes are you creating values for?
Who is your most important customer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Resource
What key resources does your value proposition require?
What resources are important the most in distribution channels, customer relationships, revenue stream…?</td>
<td>Distribution Channel
Through which channels that your customers want to be reached?
Which channels work best? How much do they cost? How can they be integrated into your and your customers' routines?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="3">Cost Structure
What are the most cost in your business?
Which key resources/ activities are most expensive?</td>
<td colspan="2">Revenue Stream
For what value are your customers willing to pay?
What and how do they recently pay? How would they prefer to pay?
How much does every revenue stream contribute to the overall revenues?</td>
</tr>
</table>

(You will find this template in the second part of the resource pack)

The canvas model provides a framework for you to fill in together. You should print it out or draw it on a big flipchart and then sketch and discuss each element together. It is recommended to start with the middle section (value propositions) asking the question "What do you do?" and then work your way towards the sides and the bottom using the following guiding questions:

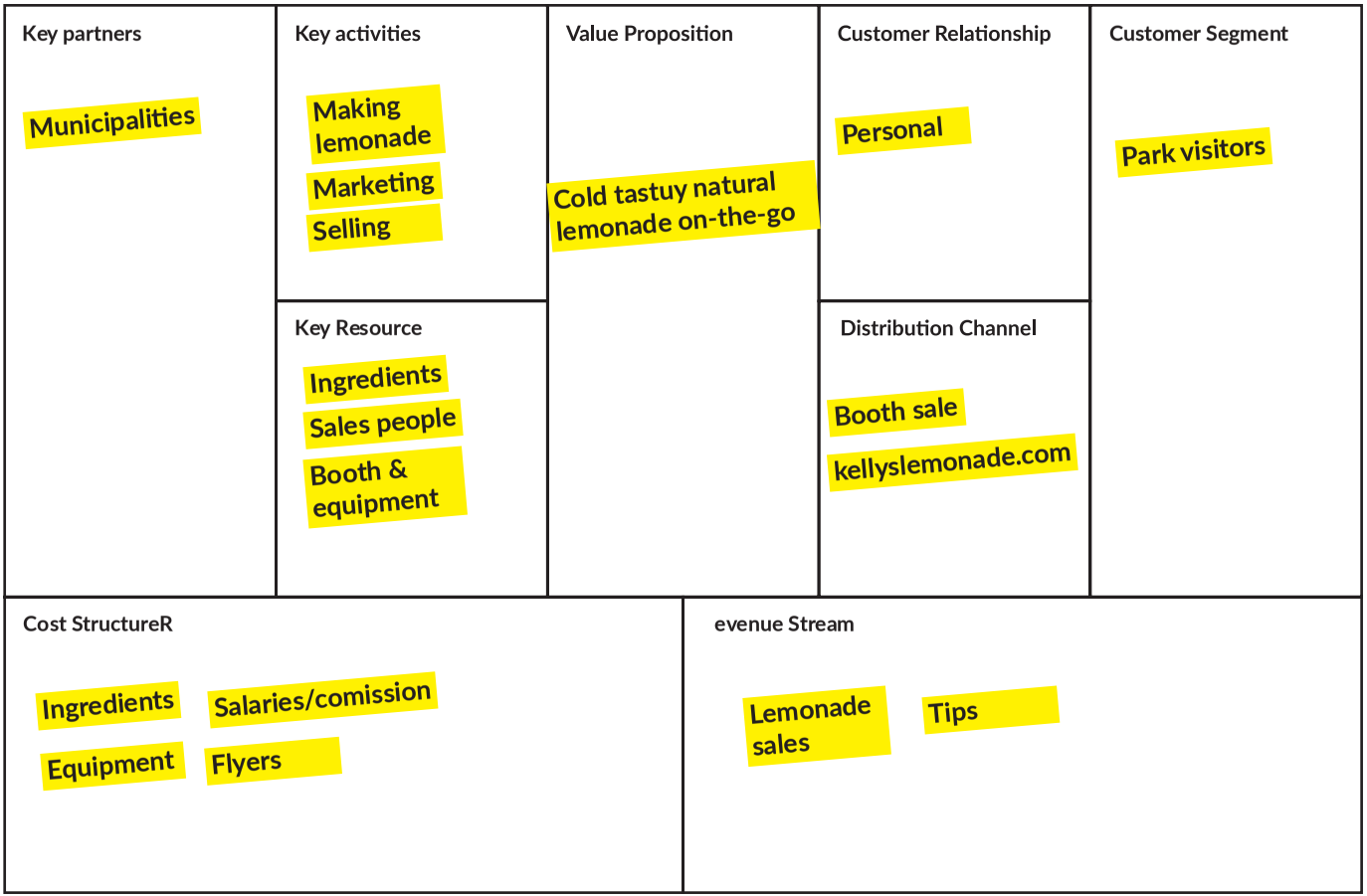
Section	Guiding question(s)
Value Propositions	What do you do?
Key Activities	How do you do it?
Key Resources	What do you need?
Key Partners	Who will help you?
Customer Relationships	How do you interact?
Customer Segments	Who do you help?
Channels	How do you reach them?
Cost Structure	What will it cost?
Revenue Streams	How much will you make?

The canvas model is an organizing tool to reflect on your performance and plan ahead for sustainability of your cooperative. It's simplicity helps to focus on the bigger picture, however you will have to add a bit more information to create a full picture of your cooperative:

- aims and objectives of the cooperative
- information about the members
- description of your product or service
- information about the market
- structure of the cooperative
- financial information
- long-term plans.

Without going into detail about all of these points, two of them will be deepened in the following texts: market research and finance plan.

Kelly's Lemonade Stand: Refreshing Lemonade



Market research

The goal of a market research is to gather any information you can find about your target market and costumers, such as:

- what are the market conditions? which are the suppliers you will have to work with?
- do you need special equipment? how much staff will you need?
- are there any potential costumers for your product?

Other than gathering information about the costumers, the market research is also a tool to analyze the competition, e.g. by asking:

- is there any competition in your field?
- what makes your product unique or superior to other products offered?

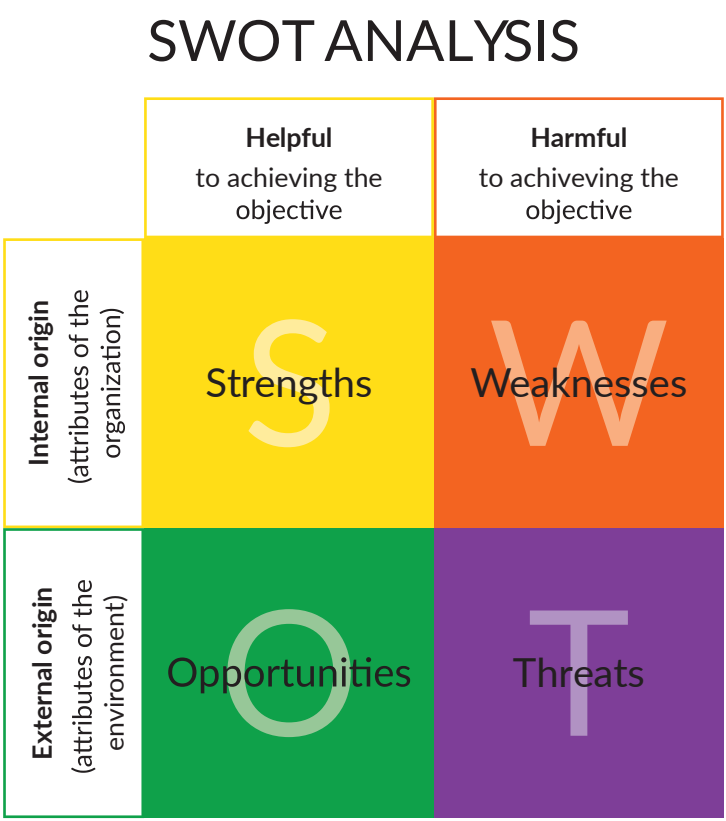
And of course you will have to analyze the prices of the products in your market segment:

- can you sell your product so it generates enough income?

To conduct a market research, you can use so-called primary and secondary sources. Primary sources contain information from talking directly to people. You could ask the public if they would use your product or service, ask them what they would improve in competing products or services or set up a focus group to test your product or service. Secondary research comes from already-assimilated data that you can access: wider economic or demographic data, data about what worked in your market segment or what hasn't worked there. Usually, a mix of primary and secondary sources is recommended.

To analyze all the data you collected, you can e.g. apply a SWOT analysis to help identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to your project idea:

- Strengths: characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others.
- Weaknesses: characteristics of the business that place the business or project at a disadvantage relative to others.
- Opportunities: elements in the environment that the business or project could exploit to its advantage.
- Threats: elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project.



Finance plan

The finance plan will be one of the most important parts of your business plan: it's not only a helpful tool to see if your idea pays off, you will also be able to see if and when you will be able to pay yourself a decent salary, which expenses you have, if you have to take loans and much more. It basically exists of expenditure and income.

In the expenses section you will have so-called start-up expenses, which you will have to pay to getting your business up and which are usually not re-occurring, such as registration fees, licensing, starting inventory, equipment and machines, etc. Once the business is set up, you will have so-called operating expenses, such as salaries and insurances, rent, utilities, distribution, office supplies and much more.

On your income side you list all your potential income, such as sales, grants or donations, subletting, interests, etc.

In the beginning, you might not know all your exact expenses, but try to make the numbers as accurate as possible and produce different scenarios for each month and a couple of year's trading.

Put in your numbers into a spreadsheet template or a computer program. There are plenty of useful tools and programs out there to help you do your calculations. GNU cash is a free bookkeeping program with all the features needed.

What you wanna do in the next step is, to work out your total income and expenditure and from that your profit (or loss). Profit (or loss) is the difference between the total amount your cooperative earns and the costs it must pay, so:

INCOME – EXPENDITURE = PROFIT (OR LOSS).

In the beginning your financial plan probably won't show a profit, that's normal. You will have to adjust it and borrow money, just as most of the new businesses do! The important point in your financial plan is, that you should always aim to have enough money to last several months without any income.

Additionally to the profit and loss prediction, it is important to keep an eye on the cashflow of your cooperative: you will have to make sure that your business is liquid (meaning you have enough cash) on a month by month basis. You will have to make a cashflow forecast, checking the balance of income and expense for each month and if you discover red numbers at some point, you'll have to recalculate and if needed, take a higher loan.

Once you start to do financial transactions, meaning you are starting to generate income and expenses, you will have to record any cash movement which is going in and out. You can make your own spreadsheets for that or use a bookkeeping software, such as GNU cash. Another helpful tool is to set up a system for tracking invoices and receipts, so you know which creditor you have to pay when. Bookkeeping is a very important core task in your cooperative and should never be neglected. You will have to check your books at least once a month and the more members of the cooperative know how to do that, the better. Like this you avoid hierarchies and confusion and you make sure that the books are kept regularly.

Further resources:

- https://diytoolkit.org/
- https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/workersco-ops.pdf

FairCoin and FairCoop on Alternative Economies

FairCoop describes itself as an ecosystem, set up to build a new global economic system based on cooperation, solidarity, and justice in our economic relations.

They believe that the cooperative ecosystem can become a synergistic meeting point amongst many different alternative economy frameworks, joining practices that any of the networks agree on. These ecosystems can work locally or globally in an interrelated way, combining autonomy and shared values.

The FairCoop Ecosystem has already developed some important, interconnected pieces since it was born in September 2014.

FairCoin

FairCoin is set up as a global social cryptocurrency, which sets itself apart from other cryptocurrencies ecologically in that:

While Bitcoin has rightly been critiqued for the extreme and ever increasing levels of energy consumption that are used to mine Bitcoin and validate transactions; FairCoin is based on a blockchain that works dramatically differently, a small number of computers collaborate rather than compete to validate transactions through Cooperatively Validated Nodes (CVNs) and thus the energy consumption is both minimal and sustainable.

Furthermore, socially, the FairCoin pushes for a pervasive ethic of solidarity. FairCoin is not set up to support investors who want to trade currencies to make profits. On the contrary, the coin is much more valuable within the network than outside of it, meaning it is intended to encourage cooperation among like-minded cooperatives. One of the major tasks in building such a circular economy is to create direct links between producers and consumers, to set up a trust network so that goods can be easily moved from place to place. This enables us to establish a basis for exchange, which can then be developed in different ways, using various currencies (local, crypto or fiat), to facilitate these alternative exchanges.

Links for further reading:

- FairCoop: https://fair.coop/en/about-us/about
- FairCoin: https://fair-coin.org/en/faircoin-faqs
- You can also join your local FairCoop node via public Telegram group.
- Find cooperatives to support who accept FairCoin as payment: http://use.fair-coin.org/

Cooperative Values: Profit vs Ideology

There are moments within the life-cycle of a cooperative when difficult decisions need to be made. These decisions can come up early on, or only emerge later as the expansion of the production becomes a topic, however, these decisions most often spin around the dilemma of profit versus ideology.

There are some business moves that are considered inherently profitable, e.g. sourcing materials from the cheapest vendor, which is something that fails to hold up to ideological principles of fairness when we consider what the laborers involved in the harvesting/producing of the materials must have been paid. If we want our principles to be able to trickle down the supply chain and say that our products have been as ethically sourced as possible, this decision is likely to have detrimental effects on our business' profit-margins. There are however growing markets in which Fairtrade certified products sell quite well, so ethical sourcing is by no means a definite loss or a failed business.

Where we reach a impasse with these questions is with the producing for our own communities. We know that there are richer markets, either in areas west of where we live or in neighborhoods where everyone drives expensive cars, who can afford our ethically sourced products. But we don't want to produce exclusively for this market. We want our friends, family, and community members in general to have access to the high-quality, ethically-produced stuff our cooperatives are capable of offering. Why can't we make something affordable to them, while still paying ourselves (and the others down the supply chain) a fair wage? What's gone wrong in this equation???

We think it's important for every cooperative to have these discussions openly and not be afraid of sticking to their principles or compromising, depending on the situation. Exploitation, whether it's towards oneself or towards others, is never going to bring us closer to liberation. While giving up because it can't go perfectly is also not going to help us to achieve our aims.

To facilitate the exploration of this topic in your group (aspiring or existing cooperative) you'll find a module in the second part of this resource guide.

Identifying and Avoiding Burnout

Setting up a cooperative will be a very exciting experience, for some it might be the fulfillment of their dreams and it is definitely a huge opportunity to shape your work environment in an alternative way. But of course there are pitfalls coming with it.
Especially in the beginning, when there's a lot to do, working schedules are not established yet and tasks may take longer, self-exploitation and burnout are highly probable. But also in an established cooperative where people have their fixed working schedules, regular check-ins are necessary to prevent people from burning out.

What is burnout?

Burnout can happen in many different spheres of life, e.g. in the work shpere or in the activist culture. In cooperatives, which can be seen as settled inbetween these two spheres, members have to take special care of each other, to maintain healthy working conditions. Already in 1998 Pines and Aronson defines burnout as "... a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding. The emotional demands are often caused by a combination of very high expectations and chronic situational stresses. Burnout is accompanied by an array of symptoms including physical depletion, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, disillusionment and the development of negative self-concept and negative attitudes towards work, people and life itself. In its extreme form, burnout represents a breaking point beyond which the ability to cope with the environment is severely hampered."

Burnout results from working too hard or experiencing too much stress. It occurs, when we demand too much from ourselves, when our goals we set are unrealistic, if we don't find time to relax and if we're unable to delegate tasks.

In a cooperative, the symptoms of burnout should be seen as warning signs, which needs immediate action in terms of developing more sustainable and healthy working conditions.

What are the symptoms?

Burnout is a process and does not happen over night. This is why it is so important to look at the warning signs and take action as early as possible.

- Symptoms of burnout can include:
- The feeling that work is taking over your life.
- Difficulties in making decisions.
- Inability to stay focused.
- Insomnia, difficulty in sleeping, or getting enough sleep.
- A growing tendency to think negatively.
- Feelings of hopelessness.
- A loss of sense of purpose and energy.

Physical indications of burnout include muscle tension, restriction of blood flow to the tissues and increased adrenaline buildup. These physiological signs can lead to headache, backache and exhaustion.

A burnout rating scale with a small questionnaire and exercises to self-test is to be found in the second part of this resource pack.

Strategies to prevent/deal with burnout

To prevent and deal with burnout is not only the individual responsibility of the person experiencing it.

In a cooperative, it is important to support each other, to take time to hear how others in the collective are doing. Even if it seems that there's so much to do, that there's no time for that, it really helps to know what is going on in the lives of your comrades, because this might affect their work sphere as well. It is also helpful to regularly share feelings about the work in your cooperative, about your goals and tasks, if someone is overwhelmed or if things aren't going as well as planned. An exchange like this should be followed by a collective strategy to cope with the situation, such as revision and redistribution of tasks.

A realistic planning of aims and tasks is useful to prevent overworking and burnout from the beginning on. Take the time to plan as far in advance as possible and consider whether your goals are truly realistic with the capacities you have. These plans should be revised regularly, and changed if necessary, according to everyone's time and energy capacities. Figure out who has which skills and knowledge in the collective and which are your strenghts and weaknesses. Rotating tasks is a key element of horizontal organizing and helps taking the burden of individuals to be the only one to handle a task. Do some skillsharings and maintain handover documents, so tasks can be shared and rotated easily.

It doesn't matter which of these strategies you decide to apply in the group, regular check-ins and debriefings are really important for group dynamics. This can happen in the whole group or in pairs, or can be done with external help, like in visioning trainings, external supervision or mentoring.

On an individual level, good planning is a key element of avoiding burnout. Taking enough time to sleep and eat is as essential as planning your work tasks realistically. If you took over a task and cannot complete it, don't hesitate to say so! Make sure that you take regular breaks and set boundaries regarding your working hours. Take some time off after a big and stressful task. Try to figure out which tasks grind you the most and try to create ways of dealing with them. Know your own limits and capacities: It is ok not to take on a task and maybe it's time to re-evaluate the project!

Good planning is not only important in the work sphere but also outside of it. Plan recovery time and vacation as well as time to do the things you really like and enjoy!

Secure Communication and Digital Privacy

The importance of secure communication and digital privacy cannot be overstated. Nowadays, it's not only political activists or journalists who have to rely on specific tools to improve secure communication and browsing, but the average user discovered the importance of these means. We see internet and communication security as a transversal topic and the necessity for a digital security plan.
If you want to improve your digital security, you'll find some of the most common tips below and a list of online resource to deepen your understanding, in the end of this chapter.

Secure and anonymous web browsing

There are some small and simple steps how you can make your browsing more secure and provide alternatives to Google:

- Switch your default search engine, e.g. to duckduckgo.com, startpage.com
- For anonymous browsing on your computer use the Tor Browser (torproject.org), which bounces your connection between several random volunteer computers. For browsing with your Smartphone, use the Orbot application.
- recommended add-ons to install in your browser:
- HTTPS Everywhere: an extension that encrypts your communications with many major websites, making your browsing more secure.
- uBlock Origin: an extension which blocks ads and trackers.
- Cookie AutoDelete: automatically deletes cookies when they are no longer used by open browser tabs. With the cookies, lingering sessions, as well as information used to spy on you, will be expunged.

Email communication and encryption

For e-mail encryption, you'll have to use an email client, such as Thunderbird, which has an Enigmail extension for encrypting, decrypting, digitally signing and verifying digitally signed e-mails. The equivalent for the smartphone is called K-9 Mail.

Encrypted messaging

For messaging on the smartphone, there are two apps recommended, Signal and Wire. both provide end-to-end encryption for instant messaging, voice and video calling and file sharing.

There are many recommended clients for instant messaging on the desktop, such as e.g. Pidgin, Gajim, Coy, which all support OTR (=OffTheRecord) encryption.

Passwords

We are using passwords for everything: e-mailing, banking, social media and much more. Data protection starts with choosing the right and secure passwords. We don't only want to protect our data from other humans, but from computer programs, so a good password should have the following criteria:

- it should be long: the longer the safer. Some people use passphrases that contain several words.
- it should be complex: for more complexity, include a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols.
- it shouldn't be personal: don't relate your password to your date of birth, name, telephone number, child's or pet's name, etc.
- keep it secret: don't ever share your passwords with anyone. If there is the need to do so, change your password after the person is done using your account.
- make it practical: don't write passwords down, try to remember them. If you cannot remember a strong password, you can use a password manager to store them.
- make it unique: don't use the same password for several accounts and

don't swap passwords around different accounts.

- keep it fresh: change your important passwords occasionally, refresh them every year or so.

If you don't want to remember all your different secure passwords, you can store them in a password manager, e.g. KeePassX, a free open source password manager, which helps you to manage your passwords in a secure way. All passwords are in one database, which is locked with one master key or a key file.

We are sure that there's much more to secure communication and digital security as we only provide a short list with the most common issues. Please do surf the internet to dig deeper into each of these topics!

Further resources:

- Digital security and tacticts: https://securityinabox.org/en/
- Top 5 tips for digital security & privacy: https://howto.information-activism.org/content/top-5-tips-digital-security-privacy.html
- Tools for more secure communication: https://glocal.coop/blog/tools-for-more-secure-communication/
- A DIY Guide to Feminist Cybersecurity: https://hackblossom.org/cybersecurity/
- Broad compilation of privacy tools: https://www.privacytools.io/
- More info about strong passwords: https://securityinabox.org/en/guide/passwords/

Section II: Skillsharing Modules and Resources

COOPERATION AT WORK

Main goals:

- Consider how cooperative organizing can be a living example of social justice in action;
- Reflect on key challenges that arise within cooperatives and what we can do about them;
- Practice key skills for effective collaboration in groups.

Start Time	Min	ACTIVITIES	Materials/ Notes
13:00	10’	Could catch up a bit with the early comers?	Patience
13:10	30’	**Introductions** Introduce ourselves briefly, names, facilitating this workshop, how we are engaged with collectivity and cooperative work/living structures. Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves to the group. Name, what collectives they are a part of and anything else about themselves that they would like to share. (45 sec per person – pass the wristwatch) Present the flip-chart of the aims. Present the flip-chart of the agenda Check Language Step forward, step back. Encourage participation, we are all experts Check for pictures	Wristwatch for keeping time flip of the aims flip of the agenda
13:40	10’	Chairs Explain we are going to do a small practical exercise to get started. The exercise will involve a bit of movement in the room and may involve a bit of contact but not a lot. You will be given an objective. While pursuing your objective you must attend two rules: only use the designated chairs, and you won’t speak. Those are the only guidelines you are given. Debrief	

13:50	10’	**Key skills for effective collaboration** Turn to your neighbour and briefly share what what you think we need to collaborate effectively. Whole group harvest: Solicit a list of skills, conditions, attitudes and values from the group If possible, save the last 2 minutes for individual reflection where each person can think of which skills they are good at, need improvement in, etc. (but actually, I think these questions will come up in the active listening part) Mention which ones we will focus on in this workshop	Blank flip paper and pens for those who didn’t bring it along
14:00	40’	**Active listening** A key skill for effective collaboration is listening. A frequently undervalued skill in our society, where the focus is often put on making yourself heard and understood. Listening helps us understand each others’ opinions and concerns, which is important if we are part of a team. Levels of listening theory 10 min Listening to yourself – focused on your own internal voice and thoughts. Examples: thinking about what you want to say on the topic, thinking how annoying you find the speaker, thinking about what you might make for dinner.	Levels of listening

		Active Listening – focused on the words that others say. Attention spotlight is more externally than internally focused. Examples: Asking questions to deepen understanding, succinctly restating what someone has said to check you have understood fully and get to the essence of their point. Active Listening + – focused on the broader context - body language of speaker, specific words and intentions behind them, tone of voice, interactions between people, who says what and who doesn't speak, how what is said is received by others. Much less focused on your inner world because your attention and energy are so much more externally focused. Active Listening + – focused on the broader context - body language of speaker, specific words and intentions behind them, tone of voice, interactions between people, who says what and who doesn't speak, how what is said is received by others. Much less focused on your inner world because your attention and energy are so much more externally focused. Deep Listening – focused on all internal and external information in order to help the group (it contains the different levels combined). Examples: having speedy awareness of interpersonal dynamics, reading overt and covert signals in the group, making judgments about energy levels and how the process is being engaged with by different people, knowing what kinds of facilitative interventions to make and when to make them.	

		When the group can work through something itself, taking risks, trusting your intuition, being upfront with your own emotions when appropriate to help the group move forwards (expressing strong emotion if you feel it as it is unlikely that you are the only person in the room who feels that), knowing where different people are in the process, recognizing emotional responses in the group, noticing power dynamics. We will all have skills for all stages of listening and they are all important for organizing together with others. Sometimes we need to listen to ourselves (first stage) as it gives us important information, for example, it is rare that you will be the only person feeling hungry in a meeting that has gone on for 3 hours. Listening to ourselves might tell us important info like it could be time for a break. When we're collaborating it is important to try to move to the deeper stages of listening. Listening deeply can help people feel that their contributions are valued, help combine our talents and knowledge towards creative solutions and build strong groups Explain that we will spend some time working at the second and third stages of listening – Active Listening//Active Listening + - and summarizing Short explanation of summarizing. To boil down the essence of what someone has said to one or two sentences which will help clarify their position or thoughts. Set up (3 mins)	

		Get in pairs, preferably with someone you you haven't talked to yet. Choose who will practice listening and summarizing first and who will speak – you will both get a chance to practice. The speaker will talk about a topic for 2 minutes – I will tell you when it is time. Then the listener will offer a tentative summary and check with the speaker if it is accurate (If we offer an inaccurate summary boldly when we facilitate we risk showing that we haven't listened well, or offending the speaker by misrepresenting them). Question: What characteristics or attributes do you bring to cooperative organizing? With the list in mind, what would you personally like to focus on developing? Run (2 mins) Debrief in Pairs (5 mins) - How did it feel to be listened to / summarized? - How did it feel to listen actively? (2 min buffer) SWAP (7 mins) Whole group debrief: (10 mins) - From that experience and your debrief do you have any tips for good listening? - What made it easier to listen? - What made you felt listened to? - How do you think actively listening contributes to effective collaboration?	Summarizing flip Chart with times and tasks for the exercise Question flip Debrief questions flip

		Generalization: • relationships are the most crucial element to sustaining social movements, even more so than ideological commitments • strong ties are crucial for facilitating trust, motivation and commitment, while weaker ties are also important but more for access to information, skills and education • all meetings can be 'relational' - wheth-er they are house meetings or one-on-one meetings, etc. isn't it a fascinating perspective to have in mind that each of these 'relational' activities is a part of a wider process of community building / movement strengthening?	Empty flip to collect tips

14:40	40’	**Organizing Workloads in Groups** Segway: Ok, let’s stop to ask some fundamental questions about why we want to work collaboratively. Is it because the ideas we can come up with together are more vivid and have more transformative potential or is it that the tasks get done more easily or efficiently when we do them together? Either way, it’s because we want to accomplish some tasks together. Collectively. And there are many ways that this can be structured.There are often a lot of tasks to do. We’re going to consider now how we can most effectively organize this workload. Some options for how a group can organize: · clear Individual roles · working groups · everyone does everything · one or two people do most stuff with some support from others · a mixture of individual roles, working groups. **10min in 3 small groups** I’ll give each one of you a way of organizing to analyse: · clear individual roles, working groups, everyone does everything · questions for each of the groups: (on a flip) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this way of working? What can make it work better? How can you delegate responsibility? How can you ensure people can participate in different ways? 10min	Flip with questions blank flips/ paper and markers for small groups to collect their answers

		Present and discuss Whole Group Feedback – Advantages, disadvantages, tips for making it work better 5min Application: (personal reflection) How is it organized in a group you are currently part of or how would you like it to be organized in a group you will form or develop? Let them know that they will share this briefly in pairs after 5 mins individual thinking time. Be around to support them if they can't think of a context Take time to think of particular tasks in your group (maybe one that's difficult to complete). Keeping that task in mind, plus the pros and cons of these 3 main task distribution options, can you imagine a different structure/ way of accomplishing that task collectively? 5 mins Pair Work - share what came up for you e.g. a new approach to organizing workloads in your groups and briefly discuss any challenges you might have in implementing this. you can ask clarifying questions to help the other person get deeper in coming up with solutions for the task sharing in their collective setting. Asking things like, what obstacles are in the way of shifting this task load?	blank flip to collect tips blank flip to collect tips

		What can you imagine helping everyone to feel better with the group processes around this particular task? thank you. we'll come back and troubleshoot some more challenges in bigger groups and hopefully get some more clarity on how to work through them.	
15:20	20'	BREAK	
15:40	50'	Trouble-shooting common challenges using coaching questions Intro 15 mins We want to tackle some of the key challenges that arise within cooperatives and what we can do about them. To do that we're going to ask some volunteers to think of a challenge that they are facing, in a cooperative or a group that works according to cooperative principles. This should be something you're willing to explore a bit and have others ask you questions to explore in more depth. We'll ask for a few different situations and then break in to groups so start thinking now if you have a challenge you would like some support overcoming. Everyone else can move towards the challenge that they are most interested in exploring. In those small groups the person who experiences the challenge will be at the center of the discussion. The other people in the group are there to ask open questions which support the person with the challenge to explore it and consider it from different angles until a possible way forward is identified.	GROW flip blank flips for the groups GROW handout

		To do this it might be useful to keep a frame-work in mind called GROW. This is a tool used in coaching but in our experience it can also be very useful in cooperatives as it provides a structure which can support you to help each other to address challenges. Talk through the GROW Model (establishing your coachee's Goal, Reality, Opportunities, and Way Forward) through encouraging and curious questioning. Give out handout and give a couple of mins for people to look through it. Emphasize key skills: Active Listening & Ques-tioning Run in small groups for 25 mins Debrief (10 mins) How was that? How could you apply GROW or these skills in your own organization, coop or group?	
16:30	10'	Closing Reflection and Commitments Quick summary of what we did today and where we're at Silent evaluation time for personal reflection on what was touched on today and how it can be applied in our collectives	Refer to agenda flip Flip with questions

		participants are encouraged to just think and be with their thoughts for the first 5 minutes, then take the remaining 5 minutes to write down some commitment to themselves on what they will try out. They are invited to share this commitment with the whole group during the next step	
16:40	10’	Next steps Round of sharing either commitments made or other feedback to the group. Pass newsletter sign up sheet, point at further reading, offer follow up support GOODBYE, Bon Voyage	Resources flips
16:50	10’	Evaluation Filling evaluation questionnaires	feedback forms
17:00		END	

WORKSHOP: Youth Rethinking Work

Aims:

- Get a deeper understanding of the Romanian youths' status as employees in a neoliberal system
- Discuss the difficulties and challenges we encounter in relation with our coworkers, employers and the authorities
- Learning collaborative methods, self-organization practices and mutual support

Timeline:

Time	Activity
11.00 – 11.30	Introduction
11.30 – 13.00	First session
13.15 – 14.45	Second session
14.45 – 15.45	Lunch break
15.45 – 17.15	Third session
17.30 – 18.30	Fourth session

Duration	Description	Facilitator's notes/materials
Introduction 30'	Presentation of the facilitators and agenda, round with a question: what do you need to learn here today?	Needs and expectations written on flipchart.
Session 1 30' 30' 30'	**Sharing our stories** talk in pairs about your experience with work in general, what do you do now? How did you start your work path? Is your current work the result of choice or necessity? (15 min./person) **Input** Short intro into the context – what has changed in last decade? What do the statistics say? Unemployment rate, wage differences etc. **Exercise** Spectrum line – where am I on the labor market?	A4 papers, flipchart paper Tape on the floor

Session 2 60’ 30’	**Mapping of the challenges at work** In small groups chose the example you want to work on. Further draw the scheme trying to map all the levels: - your colleagues/coworkers - your employer - the legal system and the market and write the difficulties you may face in the relation to them. Presenting and talking Group discussion – where we can change the situation? Where do we have an influence? What do we need to improve the conditions under which we work? How do we feel about it?	Before the mapping make an example (facilitator can use their story) Flipchart paper, tape, colorful pens

Session 3 10' 15' 5' 30' 30'	**Solutions transforming into processes** **Energizer** **Visualization** Led exercise to visualize the ideal work place. **Brainstorming** Based on the previous exercise people throw their ideas, proposals and concepts about organizing the perfect work space. Further explanation of collaboration, support, self-organization and sustainability. Critical reflection What new difficulties could appear and how we can overcome them together? Pairs/small groups/whole groups.	Check with people what they are ok with – touching, moving fast, eyes closed - make sure everyone is comfortable with it Make some notes :) If people give other terms gently suggest collaboration, support and sustainability, but don't force it and explain whatever you have. Some terms are not common, prepare the definition in advance if you want. Check the energy level and match with the best configuration.

Session 4 30’ 15’ 15’	**Next steps and closing** Focus on learning process – what knowledge/skills/competencies I need to feel empowered and shape my work path? How can I get them? What I already have? After first round of sharing ask people about the social skills to work with other people (the idea is to show them, they are ready and competent enough). Evaluation and further reading recommendations Last round – how do you feel right now?	 Alternative: evaluation cards to fill in

Workshop: Collective organizing, Economical Disadvantage

time	content	method	material
11:00	arrivals, getting to know each other introduction, wishes for working together (trust, respect, communication), expectations presenting the agenda	- open circle with short introduction - input from the facilitators/team - creating the flipchart together	symbols: ball, square box, thread flipchart, post its visualized agenda printed agenda for everyone
12:00	How are we experiencing the situation on the labour market? Which challenges do we face?What's the connection to our social status (age/class/gender/race)	- individual reflection with a questionaire - exchange in three small groups - bring key points to the whole group	questionaire flipchart
12:40	Why are we organizing collectively? Why do we want it or need it? Which hopes are behind this?	- conversation in pairs with key notes on moderation cards - collect and cluster, short summary	moderation cards, sticky wall
13:15	lunch break		

14:30	chances and challenges of collective organizing (based on our experiences)	- groups of 4 - presentation in a big group	flipchart with questions empty flipcharts to take notes in the groups
15:15	How do we cope with the mentioned challenges, which ways of coping do we know? Collecting the tools, learning the new ones	- collective case counseling/action learning set - present and try out the method	visualization of the steps of collective case counseling
16.15	coffee break		
16:30	first steps to collective organizing	- input from the facilitator, case study to give an example	visualization of first steps printed copies
17:00	Summary - collect key experiences, propose literature, events, organizations	- learning pearls	poster proposals
17:30	feedback to the workshop	- five fingers/circle opinion barometer	empty A4 paper

ANTI-OPPRESSIVE COOPERATION AT WORK

Main goals:

- Consider how cooperative organizing can be a living example of social justice in action;
- Reflect on key challenges that arise within cooperatives and what we can do about them;
- Practice key skills for effective collaboration in groups;
- Identify what makes participants feel safe and supported in an insecure situation;
- Create awareness of needs around emotional safety as a background for the following analysis of what is needed to challenge workplace discrimination;
- Identify elements from EU employment equality directives that can be applied to cooperative work, allyship, and the creation of safer spaces as anti-oppression work.

DAY1

Start Time	Min	ACTIVITIES	Materials/Notes
13:00	10'	Could catch up a bit with the early comers?	Patience
13:10	30'	**Introductions** Introduce ourselves briefly, names, facilitating this workshop, how we are engaged with collectivity and cooperative work/living structures. Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves to the group. Name, what collectives they are a part of and anything else about themselves that they would like to share. (45 sec per person – pass the wristwatch Present the flip-chart of the aims. Present the flip-chart of the agenda Check Language Step forward, step back. Encourage participation, we are all experts Check for pictures	Wristwatch for keeping time flip of the aims flip of the agenda
13:40	10'	**Chairs** Explain we are going to do a small practical exercise to get started. The exercise will involve a bit of movement in the room and may involve a bit of contact but not a lot. You will be given an objective. While pursuing your objective you must attend two rules: only use the designated chairs, and you won't speak. Those are the only guidelines you are given. Debrief	

13:50	15’	**Key skills for effective collaboration** Turn to your neighbor and briefly share what what you think we need to collaborate effectively. Whole group harvest: Solicit a list of skills, conditions, attitudes and values from the group If possible, save the last 2 minutes for individual reflection where each person can think of which skills they are good at, need improvement in, etc. (but actually, I think these questions will come up in the active listening part) Mention which ones we will focus on in this workshop	Blank flip paper and pens for those who didn’t bring it along
14:05	40’	**Active listening** A key skill for effective collaboration is listening. A frequently undervalued skill in our society, where the focus is often put on making yourself heard and understood. Listening helps us understand each others’ opinions and concerns, which is important if we are part of a team. Levels of listening theory 10 min **Listening to yourself** – focused on your own internal voice and thoughts. Examples: thinking about what you want to say on the topic, thinking how annoying you find the speaker, thinking about what you might make for dinner.	Levels of listening

		Active Listening – focused on the words that others say. Attention spotlight is more externally than internally focused. Examples: Asking questions to deepen understanding, succinctly restating what someone has said to check you have understood fully and get to the essence of their point. **Active Listening** + – focused on the broader context - body language of speaker, specific words and intentions behind them, tone of voice, interactions between people, who says what and who doesn't speak, how what is said is received by others. Much less focused on your inner world because your attention and energy are so much more externally focused. **Deep Listening** – focused on all internal and external information in order to help the group (it contains the different levels combined). Examples: having speedy awareness of interpersonal dynamics, reading overt and covert signals in the group, making judgments about energy levels and how the process is being engaged with by different people, knowing what kinds of facilitative interventions to make and when to make them – when the group can work through something itself, taking risks, trusting your intuition, being upfront with your own emotions when appropriate to help the group move forwards (expressing strong emotion if you feel it as it is unlikely that you are the only person in the room who feels that), knowing where different people are in the process, recognising emotional responses in the group, noticing power dynamics.	

		We will all have skills for all stages of listening and they are all important for organizing together with others. Sometimes we need to listen to ourselves (first stage) as it gives us important information, for example, it is rare that you will be the only person feeling hungry in a meeting that has gone on for 3 hours. Listening to ourselves might tell us important info like it could be time for a break. When we're collaborating it is important to try to move to the deeper stages of listening. Listening deeply can help people feel that their contributions are valued, help combine our talents and knowledge towards creative solutions and build strong groups Explain that we will spend some time working at the second and third stages of listening – Active Listening//Active Listening + - and summarizing Short explanation of summarizing. To boil down the essence of what someone has said to one or two sentences which will help clarify their position or thoughts. Set up (3 mins)	

		Get in pairs, preferably with someone you you haven't talked to yet. Choose who will practice listening and summarizing first and who will speak – you will both get a chance to practice. The speaker will talk about a topic for 2 minutes – I will tell you when it is time. Then the listener will offer a tentative summary and check with the speaker if it is accurate (If we offer an inaccurate summary boldly when we facilitate we risk showing that we haven't listened well, or offending the speaker by misrepresenting them). **Question:** **What characteristics or attributes do you bring to cooperative organizing?** With the list in mind, what would you personally like to focus on developing? Run (2 mins) Debrief in Pairs (5 mins) - How did it feel to be listened to / summarized? - How did it feel to listen actively?	Summarizing flip

		(2 min buffer) SWAP (7 mins) **Whole group debrief: (10 mins)** - From that experience and your debrief do you have any tips for good listening? - What made it easier to listen? - What made you felt listened to? - How do you think actively listening contributes to effective collaboration?	Chart with times and tasks for the exercise Question flip
		Generalization: relationships are the most crucial element to sustaining social movements, even more so than ideological commitments strong ties are crucial for facilitating trust, motivation and commitment, while weaker ties are also important but more for access to information, skills and education all meetings can be 'relational' - whether they are house meetings or one-on-one meetings, etc. isn't it a fascinating perspective to have in mind that each of these 'relational' activities is a part of a wider process of community building / movement strengthening?	Debrief questions flip Empty flip to collect tips

14:45	40’	**Organizing Workloads in Groups** Segway: Ok, let’s stop to ask some fundamental questions about why we want to work collaboratively. Is it because the ideas we can come up with together are more vivid and have more transformative potential or is it that the tasks get done more easily or efficiently when we do them together? Either way, it’s because we want to accomplish some tasks together. Collectively. And there are many ways that this can be structured. There are often a lot of tasks to do. We’re going to consider now how we can most effectively organize this workload. Some options for how a group can organize: · clear Individual roles · working groups · everyone does everything · one or two people do most stuff with some support from others · a mixture of individual roles, working groups.	

		10min in 3 small groups I'll give each one of you a way of organizing to analyze: clear individual roles, working groups, everyone does everything questions for each of the groups: (on a flip) What are the advantages and disadvantages of this way of working? What can make it work better? How can you delegate responsibility? How can you ensure people can participate in different ways? 10min Present and discuss Whole Group Feedback – Advantages, disadvantages, tips for making it work better 5min Application: (personal reflection) How is it organized in a group you are currently part of or how would you like it to be organized in a group you will form or develop? Let them know that they will share this briefly in pairs after 5 mins individual thinking time.	Flip with questions blank flips/paper and markers for small groups to collect their answers blank flip to collect tips

		Be around to support them if they can't think of a context Take time to think of particular tasks in your group (maybe one that's difficult to complete). Keeping that task in mind, plus the pros and cons of these 3 main task distribution options, can you imagine a different structure/way of accomplishing that task collectively? 5 mins Pair Work - share what came up for you e.g. a new approach to organizing workloads in your groups and briefly discuss any challenges you might have in implementing this. you can ask clarifying questions to help the other person get deeper in coming up with solutions for the task sharing in their collective setting. Asking things like, what obstacles are in the way of shifting this task load? What can you imagine helping everyone to feel better with the group processes around this particular task? thank you. we'll come back and troubleshoot some more challenges in bigger groups and hopefully get some more clarity on how to work through them.	
15:25	20'	BREAK	
15:45	60'	**Trouble-shooting common challenges using coaching questions** Intro 15 mins	GROW flip

		We want to tackle some of the key challenges that arise within cooperatives and what we can do about them. To do that we're going to ask some volunteers to think of a challenge that they are facing, in a cooperative or a group that works according to cooperative principles. This should be something you're willing to explore a bit and have others ask you questions to explore in more depth. We'll ask for a few different situations and then break in to groups so start thinking now if you have a challenge you would like some support overcoming. Everyone else can move towards the challenge that they are most interested in exploring. In those small groups the person who experiences the challenge will be at the center of the discussion. The other people in the group are there to ask open questions which support the person with the challenge to explore it and consider it from different angles until a possible way forward is identified. To do this it might be useful to keep a framework in mind called GROW. This is a tool used in coaching but in our experience it can also be very useful in cooperatives as it provides a structure which can support you to help each other to address challenges.	blank flips for the groups

		Talk through the GROW Model (establishing your coachee's Goal, Reality, Opportunities, and Way Forward) through encouraging and curious questioning. Give out handout and give a couple of mins for people to look through it. Emphasize key skills: Active Listening & Questioning Run in small groups for 25 mins Debrief (10 mins) How was that? How could you apply GROW or these skills in your own organization, coop or group?	GROW handout
16:45	15'	**Closing the day** Quick summary of what we did today and where we're at Questions to ponder for tomorrow: - do you think that workplace discrimination is something that is inevitable? - what conditions make it more possible for workplace discrimination to be challenged and addressed – or even avoided, if that's something you think is possible? - how could you imagine that workplace discrimination plays out differently in collectively-organized settings versus more hierarchical ones?	Flip with questions
17:00		END	

DAY2

Start Time	Min	ACTIVITIES	Materials/ Notes
13:00	10’	Could catch up a bit with the early comers?	Patience
13:10	20’	**Introductions** Summarize yesterday’s achievements. Present the flip-chart of the aims. Present the flip-chart of the day’s agenda Go over the questions from last night. Who had some important reflections? Emphasize how workplace discrimination is a multi-layered issue and why we are focusing on this aspect here today. There are some ways in which collective organizing makes addressing workplace discrimination more difficult – as access to HR department formal complaint forms doesn’t exist, for example. And that’s why we need to have integrated ways of constantly striving for anti-oppressive, safer spaces for people who work in our cooperatives or other collectively-organized projects/workplaces.	Flips from yesterday flip of the aims flip of the agenda
13:30	10’	**Warm up exercise** Aim: Get the group in touch with what makes them feel safe and supported in an insecure situation; introducing a warm up to explore the line between being supported and being lead as a preparation to discussing the role of allies.	

		Check in if participants are ok with closing their eyes and being touched on the shoulders / arms. Ask participants to form pairs. One of each pair closes the eyes and moves around the room, deciding where to go and how fast. The other will support when needed by tapping on the shoulder of the direction that the partner should turn to in order to avoid running into something or other participants. Give stronger signs if the ”danger” becomes more immanent, if necessary grab the arm to prevent the partner from crashing into something/someone. If the person with closed eyes feels unsure and wants more directions, indicate that by stopping. Change roles after three minutes. Come back to groups and ask how participants felt. Did they feel safe? Did they they keep the initiative / control when they had their eyes closed? Did they feel supported or lead?	

13:40	5’	**Input: Comfort zone and safe zone** Use flip chart, either prepared or draw as you explain. A circle in the middle symbolizes the comfort zone, where persons have a feeling of security and belonging and their values and behaviors are generally accepted, therefore they might not feel any need to reflect / change them. People are likely to be in their comfort zone if they are part of the mainstream. A bigger circle around it symbolizes the safe zone. Here persons might feel challenged in their values and behaviors, but still have a sense of security. Learning is most likely to take place in the safe zone. Persons who are out of their safe zone feel insecure and might experience structural, emotional and physical violence. Their values and behavior are not accepted. Being out of ones safe zone one might be to preoccupied with struggling to regain a sense of security and to deal with strong emotions to learn at that very moment. However the experience can lead to personal growth and learning when reflected upon from ones safe zone later on. Persons on the margins are much more likely to make the experience of being out of their safe zone.	Comfort/ Safety Flip

13:45	20'	**Reflection on needs** Aim: Create awareness of needs around emotional safety as a background for the following analysis of what is needed to challenge workplace discrimination. Ask participants to take markers and cards and to chose a place to sit in the room where they feel comfortable. Tell them you will give them two questions to reflect on and there will be a feedback to the group afterwards. First question: What do I need to feel safe enough to address my own role in oppression, both as being part of the margin or the mainstream? Also put up the question so all can see it. Give about 5 minutes to reflect then give the Second question: Who can support me if strong emotions come up during a work meeting and how? Come back to group after 5 minutes Feed back to group: Point out that needs are always legitimate and are not to be judged / questioned. Ask participants to read out their cards (two rounds for the questions) and try to cluster on a flip chart. Put the flip chart up so the group can refer to it later on.	Markers, facilitation cards Flip with questions

14:05	20’	**Reflection on roles, and responsibilities?** Aim: Clarify that there are different roles and functions that come with different responsibilities in our work. Visualized discussion: Roles and responsibilities in anti-oppression learning If in a big group divide into groups of 4-6 participants Put the following cards in a triangle on a flip chart – Challenge oppressive behavior – Push colleagues out of their comfort / safe zone – Creating a safe space for collaborating Have cards for each of the following roles: Peer, Boss, Ally (explain concept if needed), Mainstream-Participant, Margin-Participant and a couple of empty cards for roles the participants want to add or use more then once. Ask participants to discuss what of the three actions above should / could happen in specific workplace scenario, to place the role-cards in relation to them and to write what kind of responsibility (e.g. is it a right, a choice or an obligation to do or prevent something) the different roles have in regard to these actions. Short feed back to big group.	Roles and responsibilities Flip Cards with Roles
14:25	20’	BREAK	

14:45	60’	**Allies facing workplace discrimination together** Aim: identify elements from EU employment equality directives that can be applied to co-operative work, allyship, and the creation of safer spaces as anti-oppression work. 10 min Intro Parsing out what participants already know about European Labour Law and anti-discrimination legislation at the national level. Collect details on flip. Employers in many countries are obligated to protect their employees from workplace discrimination. In the European Union, the Employment Equality Framework Directive protects against disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age in the workplace, while there are separate directives for Race and Gender. If we are our own employers, because we are engaged economically as a collective, how can we best uphold this obligation to protect each other from discrimination? How can we integrate inclusivity, allyship, and anti-oppressive methods for offering critical feedback into our cooperative work? 40 min Group Work	Blank flip-chart

		3 Groups – each gets the summary of one of the directives 1) Employment Equality Framework Directive 2) Race Equality Directive 3) Equal Treatment Directive and the following discussion questions: - What is useful from this directive in setting groundrules for our cooperative work? - What is not sufficient in these directives and we would like to take further in the creation of our safer spaces? - How can we mainstream allyship in our groups and how can we protect each other from discrimination in this way? 10 min – Sharing back in the big group Invite each group to summarise their discussion for the rest and present a flipchart with their findings.	Summaries of the 3 EU anti-discrimination directives Flip with questions
15:45	15'	**Closing Reflection and Commitments** Quick summary of what we did today and where we're at	Refer to agenda flip Flip with questions

		Silent evaluation time for personal reflection on what was touched on today and how it can be applied in our collectives participants are encouraged to just think and be with their thoughts for the first 5 minutes, then take the remaining 5 minutes to write down some commitment to themselves on what they will try out. They are invited to share this commitment with the whole group during the next step	
16:00	20’	**Next steps** Round of sharing either commitments made or other feedback to the group. GOODBYE, Viszontlátásra!	Resources flips
16:20	10’	**Evaluation** Filling evaluation questionnaires	feedback forms
16:30		**END** (30 min buffer for informal chatting after closing)	

Workshop module Group Dynamics – Understanding Conflicts

Duration: approx. 75 minutes

Min	Activities	Notes
5’	Introduction: Explain why conflicts are important for groups. They are a normal part of all group dynamics and they carry potential for growth and development of both individuals and collectives alike. In modern capitalist societies we are often told that conflicts are bad and are to be avoided in order not to disturb the status quo. It is important to break with this way of thinking and learn to act in different ways. In order to be able to do so, we need to understand what goes on underneath the surface and find ways to deal with our differences in constructive ways.	
20’	Iceberg model: Thoroughly explain the concept, using an example from your or your comrades’ experience you are willing to share with the group. Prepare the example in advance in order to be sure that you understand the model yourself.	Material: a flip-chart, markers of different colors to represent different layers of the icebergs

30’	Individual exercise: Motivate participants to draw the model and apply it to a situation from their own experience. Inform them in advance that they will share their experience with another person (we decided not to share in front of more than one person for the sake of privacy) and tell them to keep that in mind when drawing the model. They need to feel comfortable sharing the experience with someone else in the workshop.	Materials: pens, pencils and paper for taking notes and drawing Facilitator’s note: offer your assistance to the participants with the exercise, make a tour around the room and check if they are struggling with the model, but don’t intervene if not necessary.
10’	Sharing experience in pairs: Tell the participants to pair up with another person and talk about the conflict they analyzed using the model. They have 5 minutes each to talk about their experience. Encourage the listener to ask for clarifications and offer their active listening and presence in this situation. Kindly ask them not to judge the other person and not impose their own values or solutions to the other, especially if they are not asked to.	

10’	Feedback and wrap up: Create space for sharing individual impression in the whole group and talk about whether they find the model useful. Encourage discussion with the questions such as: * Do you find the model useful and in what way? * Has anything changed in your perception of conflicts in general or your particular situations after the analysis? * What else do you need is necessary to better understand conflicts? * What other steps do you think are needed to better deal with conflicts apart from the analysis that we did? * Do you see any downsides of the model and what kind? Do you see anything missing?	

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Goals:

- To present and discuss the basic model of consensus decision making process
- To critically look at consensus, share the experiences, identify the pitfalls and talk about tools
- To reflect on local conditions, which shape the patterns of decision making and influence the reception of democratic ones

Notes:
The module assumes no prior knowledge of consensus, but makes space for people with experience
Handouts and printed materials as the follow-up
The module does not include the basic workshop elements like introduction, needs, fears & expectations round, getting to know each other and evaluationThis workshop is planned in two parts, 1.5 hour each, can be easily
adjusted

Part 1: DECISION MAKING METHODS		
Duration	**Description**	**Notes**
Exercise 1 10 min.	**Warm Up –Consensus Chairs game** small groups (3-4) 5 or 6 chairs in the middle of the room taking care that other groups don't overhear, give each group a task (on a card or verbally) such as: put the chairs in a circle put the chairs by a door put the chairs by a window/radiator/etc. sit on the chairs Important: it should be possible for all groups to simultaneously achieve all of their tasks (i.e. put the chairs in a circle by the door and the radiator and then sit on them) tell the groups to start and let the action run for a few minutes debrief: What happened? How did you solve the situation? By competition or cooperation? How did that feel? Did everyone feel their needs were met? How might you have solved it? How do you think that might have felt keep the game in the back of your minds – we'll think about the principles behind it later in the workshop	Avoid using competitive language (calling the small groups teams, cheering up etc.) Don't overcomplicate the debrief, it is a simple message: cooperation not competition.

Exercise 2 20 min.	**Various methods of decision making** small groups (9 maximum) and different case study for each ask people to name the method and list pros and cons methods: unanimity, convincing argument, authoritarianism (leadership), authoritarianism with consultations, oligarchy, compromise, majority voting, preference weight, consensus	Adjust the list accordingly, if you have to remove some, leave the most common methods. Build your case studies on the same situation (a group of people want to go out for a dinner, some know each other better, some work together, they have different proposals, preferences and reservations).
Exercise 3 20 min.	**Debrief** Let people share their first thoughts, then ask about the most common methods; which are we socialized to? What do we know from places like home, school, workplace? How do we decide with our friends or colleagues? Why some are easier?	 Alternatively people can debrief in smaller groups, decide spontaneously taking into account time, energy level, group size.
Exercise 4 15 min.	**Qualities for effective consensus process** ask the group to briefly reflect on the chairs game what qualities might their group need in order to be using consensus well?	Summarize only if what you want to share has not appeared during the conversations before. Offer people handouts and shortly describe what they are about.

	Complete the list with conditions, explain when needed: active listening time clear understanding of the processes active agreement to use consensus trust and common goal good facilitation being open and honest about your needs Summary – if these conditions don't exist or can't be built, don't use consensus. One key mistake groups make is not to be aware of these conditions when they expand and grow. New people join who might not share the 'core' group's understanding and commitment.	
Exercise 5 15 min.	**How consensus works – flowchart presentation** Introduce the concept of formal consensus and its stages: clarity of topic – everyone needs to be clear to participate effectively and equally broad discussion with good listening before the group tries to make a decision cooperation – work together to build up the best ideas, not compete to knock them down	Prepare the scheme before on a big paper. Show the top-bottom direction and together with participants identify the stages they are very familiar with and the new ones too.

	Emphasise: being clear on what decision needs to be made and how much time there is to make it – restate for everyone's benefit generating ideas early on using reflection and open discussion at the start before looking for a proposal bringing out concerns early to avoid blocking later looking for an emerging proposal that synthesises the ideas of the group and takes concerns into account amending the proposal to strengthen it implementing the final decision Q&A	Tell people though the scheme can discourage at the first sight this is actually the way many people make their decisions, only structured, in order to clarify and unify the process.
Exercise 6 10 min.	**How we work with consensus?** Ask people to explain the terms: proposal, reservation (non-support), stand aside, block (veto), agreement. Together find the examples.	Spend extra minutes to talk about veto, people usually have some experiences on using it, collect various approaches.
BREAK		

Part 2: CONSENSUS CHALLENGES		
Duration	**Description**	**Notes**
Exercise 7 60 min.	**Case studies on consensus pitfalls** 3 groups different cases, the same questions: what is the situation about? do you know if from your experience? what could have been done better? After 20 minutes the cases are swapped and for the next 10 minutes another group has a chance to add some amendments, new tools. Repeat. Summary – last group presents the case and all collected solutions and suggestions. Short talk in the whole group to share the reflections. All situations refer to self-organized, non-hierarchical group with consensus chosen as the method to decide.	Encourage people to name the challenges/ identify the problems or mistakes and refer to their experiences. Alternatively you can ask one person from the initial group to move with swapping case and introduce the others. Make sure in 2nd and 3rd round people don't talk about the situation per se, rather focus on solutions.

	1st case Overpacked agenda. Describe the group meeting with time limited to 2 hours and too many points to discuss, including some requiring more time and proper preparations (like conflict between 2 people). New members are coming and there is no introduction welcoming them. During debrief ask people about their opinions on dealing with conflicts between 2 people in the whole group. **2nd case** Taking space and voices. Draw the map with people (dots) sitting almost in the circle, put names and numbers (how many times they talk during the meeting). There should be people sitting on a side, two close to each other, one really far. Let people interpret the situation freely. Some come up with online attendance, whispering translation, gender imbalance. Ask about facilitation in the last talk.	

	3rd case Hierarchies. Describe the consensus process step by step, but dominated by 'rational' voices of people with the biggest experience, no space for reservations and questions, no emo round and other tools for maintenance the spirit/atmosphere. Everything went well, people agreed, but after some left the rest vent long about their emotions. Let people add more details.	
Exercise 8 30 min.	**Q&A, closing** leave last half an hour for questions and topics put 'on the parking' explain what is in the materials once again make a round with one conclusion about people's future resolutions (on the next meeting I would like to...) in order to improve the consensus process in their group propose the energizer for group work (resolving the knot)	Be flexible. For people facing the model for the first time it takes longer to get it, while people with skills/experiences usually need to share, mostly the failures.

Key partners

Who are your key partners/suppliers?

What are the motivations for the partnerships?

Key activities

What key activities does your value proposition require?

What activities are important the most in distribution channels, customer relationships,

Key Resource

What key resources does your value proposition require?

What resources are important the most in distribution channels, customer relationships, revenue stream…?

Value Proposition

What core value do you deliver to the customer?

Which customer needs are you satisfying?

Customer Relationship

What relationship that the target customer expects you to establish?

How can you integrate that into your business in terms of cost and format?

Distribution Channel

Through which channels that your customers want to be reached?

Which channels work best? How much do they cost? How can they be integrated into your and your customers' routines?

Customer Segment

Which classes are you creating values for?

Who is your most important customer?

Cost Structure

What are the most cost in your business?

Which key resources/ activities are most expensive?

Revenue Stream

For what value are your customers willing to pay?

What and how do they recently pay? How would they prefer to pay?

How much does every revenue stream contribute to the overall revenues?

COOPERATIVE VALUES: PROFIT Vs. IDEOLOGY

Goals:

- To explore Mass (commercial) products, activities, services vs Products, service, activity that we want to do as an expression of our ideological positions
- To critically look at the core values associative with cooperativism and which tools we have to make decisions based on them

Notes:
The module assumes prior knowledge with consensus based decision making.
This discussion is planned for 90 minutes.

Duration	Description	Notes
Intro 10 min.	**Introductory question for the whole group** Share an example from your coop's experience (in 1-2 sentences) about the decision you had to make (e.g. choosing between two types of product, service or activity)	(in order to describe the subject of the workshop)

Exercise 1 10 min.	**Spectrum line** A line is drawn on the floor. The participants take place on the line according to the level they would point on the scale and afterwards comment their placement) Question: How much does this choice affect your collective? Follow-up question: Why did you choose this position?	(defining how present this topic is in participants' coops) Note from the workshop: some participants from the same coop stood on different places on the line, showing that some members might be more affected than others. This was commented with the whole group and one participant said that this issue led the participant to burnout.
Exercise 2 20 min.	**Discussion in small working groups** (4-5 participants) Share a few instances when your collective faced the decision between mass and ideological product or activity Which decision was taken and why? What factors were taken in consideration? Did it influence the collective dynamics? If yes, how?	

Exercise 2 (cont'd) 15 min.	**Share the conclusions with the big grou**p Summarize only if what you want to share has not appeared during the conversations before.	(1-2 examples for each side)
Exercise 3 10 min.	**Brainstorm** (big group) What external factors force us to balance?	Note from the workshop: this dilemma can be used to spur a discussion on the values, the ideology of the group and its principles.
Exercise 4 25 min.	**General discussion** Finding a balance and not loosing your principles or the aim of the coop. Do we need to find a balance? Is it unavoidable? What are the ways and strategies to shift the decision towards our priorities.	

Burnout rating scale

Think over the past 3 months and answer the following questions according to how often you have experienced these symptoms.

0 = never	2 = rarely	4 = often
1 = very rarely	3 = sometimes	5 = very often

1. Do you feel tired in the way that rest or sleep does not relieve?
2. Do you feel more cynical, pessimistic or disappointed about the things you used to feel possitive about?
3. Do you feel a sadness or an emptiness inside?Czujesz smutek lub pustkę w środku?
4. Do you have physical symptoms of stress, like insomnia, stomach pains, headaches, migraines?
5. Is your memory unreliable?
6. Are you irritable or emotional about small things?
7. Have you been receptive to illness lately, like colds, flu, food allergies, fever?
8. Do you feel like isolating yourself from colleagues, friends or family?
9. Is it hard to enjoy yourself, have fun, relax and experience joy in your life?
10. Do you feel that you are accomplishing less in your work?

Points in total: _____ Date: _____

Results:

0 – 15 You are doing well.

16 – 25 Some attention needed, you are a candidate.

26 – 35 You are on the road to burnout, make changes now.

36 – 50 You need to take action immediately – your health and well-being are threatened.

Reference: In The Tiger's Mouth: An Empowerment Guide For Social Action, Katrina Shields (2000) self published, p.130.

Other indicators of being over-stressed or approachuing burn out for me are:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Activities, that can prevent you from burning out

To continue:

To start:

To stop:

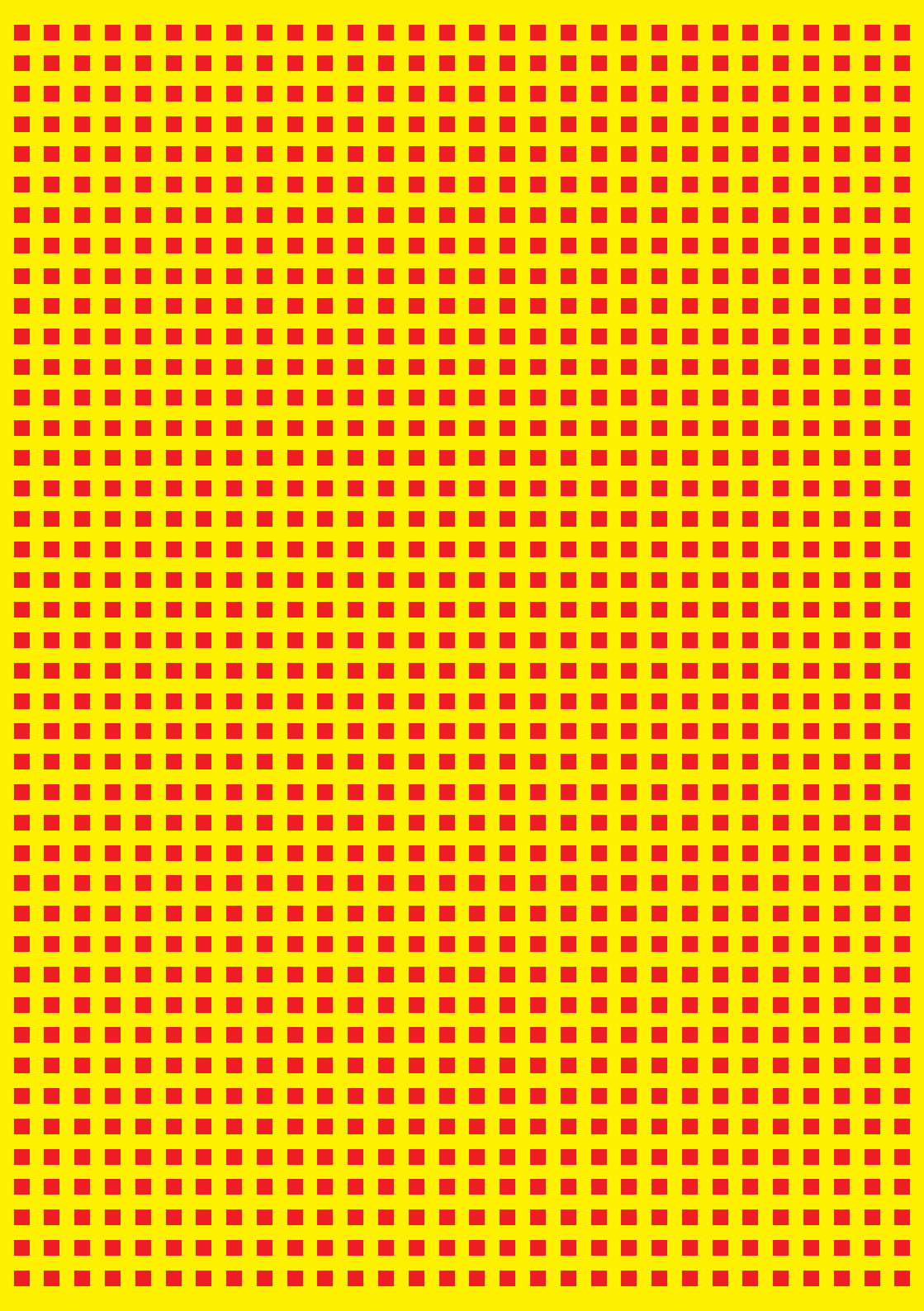
Activities/behaviours/habits mentioned above can refer to the spheres:

- emotional
- physical (health)
- s piritual
- i ntelectual
- activist
- artistic
- _____
- _____

My goals (states of mind, places to be, emotions i wish i had, situations i want to be in):

In one week:

In one month:

In one year:

Notes