

Youth Reinventing Co-operatives

Template for BCICS Co-op Case Study

Name of Co-operative:

Date of Incorporation:

Membership: Number? What kinds of people? Age? Gender?

Activity: What does the co-op do?

Organisational form: (e.g. worker/producer co-op, consumer co-op)

Area served:

Story of the Co-op

Background Info / Context

- What were the needs identified that led to the establishment of the co-operative? (e.g. lack of natural foods, employment)
- What sort of planning and/or organising was done before the co-op was incorporated?
- What was the context from which the co-op evolved? (e.g. circumstances: historical, geographical, economic, social, cultural)

Vision / Purpose / Goals

- What is the vision statement of the co-op?
- What is the mission statement?
- Why was the co-op model chosen? What are the benefits of the model?
- How does it particularly fit the needs and aspirations of young people?
- Was it formed because existing co-ops were not meeting the needs of young people?
- What are the benefits of organising the co-op to the local and outlying communities?
- What are the benefits of organising the co-op to the co-op sector?
- How does/will the co-op define and measure success?

Starting the Co-op

- Who are/were the people involved? What were/are their skills?
- Was there an existing group or organisation upon which the co-op is being/was built?
- What financial resources were available to begin with? What sorts of funding did the co-op ask for/receive?
- Was more funding needed? How was this dealt with?
- What resources were/are available in the community to help the co-op? (e.g., government, private, community, non-profit)
- Did the co-op use professional developers / facilitators / educators? What was their specific role?
- What obstacles is the co-op encountering in its development?
- What obstacles did the co-op encounter? What obstacles has the co-op overcome/not overcome?
- What sorts of things/activities have helped to facilitate the co-op's development?
- What ideas and plans does the co-op have regarding growth strategies?
- Does the co-op have a business plan in place? Were any feasibility studies done? What on?

Organisational Structure / Model used

- How is the co-op organised? Is it developing its own structure? Is it following a model suggested by someone else?
- How are decisions made: Consensus vs. majority rules?
- What is the composition of the Board. How is representation determined? Are there any special provisions made regarding the board?
- What are the specific board positions?
- What is the role of the board?
- What is the role of the co-op staff? (are they paid or unpaid)
- What is the role of the co-op members?
- What are the expectations regarding volunteering? Are there volunteers?
- How does management ensure member participation in co-op decisions
- Has there been changes in the co-op's structure over time? If so, what were the reasons for these changes in structure?
- What is the share purchase price? What types of shareholders are there?

Links to Community / Network / Outreach

- Does the co-op have formal links with the community? (e.g. bank at credit union, special projects, affiliations, etc.)
- What are the particular opportunities for member involvement? (AGM, special events, work, etc.)
- Is the co-op involved in any philanthropic activities? (donations, scholarships, sponsor events, etc.)

Future Plans

- What are the co-ops short-term goals? What are its long-term goals?
- Is the co-op anticipating any challenges?
- Does the co-op have plans for expansion, for example, to increase its membership, to widen/narrow its activities?
- What are the specific threats to the co-op's sustainability (e.g. financial / funding concerns, lack of community support)

Lessons learned

- What lessons has the co-op learned in starting/organising/running a co-op?
- What advice do members of the co-op have for others about starting/organising/running a co-op?
- Based on your experience, what advice would give to governments, educational institutions, co-operative support organizations and established co-ops about encouraging more youth to use the co-operative model in meeting their economic and social needs?