



“Kublai Khan asks to Marco Polo who is describing a bridge stone by stone: 'Which is the stone that holds the bridge?' 'The bridge – Marco Polo answers- is not held by this or that stone, it is held by the bowl line they form all together”

(I. Calvino – *The invisibles cities*)

DESIGNING THE WORKER COOP FUNCTIONING MODEL

Welcome to Step 3!

In step 1 and 2 you guided participants to identify a cooperative project and design its strategy; now it is time to support them to define how they will work together as a cooperative.

The objectives of step 3 are:

- Choose the name and the logo of your coop working project.
- Apply the cooperative principles you learnt about in step 1 in order to design the structure and the functioning of your coop working project: it is time to decide 'who will do what' and 'how' you will function all together.

Here is the itinerary we propose to you: it is up to you to pick and adapt what you need!

Define the coop working project name and logo (60')

It is important to define the coop working project identity, in accordance with the strategy you choose (e.g. identified activity and clients): a name and an image that can summarize your essence and your unicity... Think about great organisations' logos and names:



TRAINER'S GUIDE



To stimulate everyone's participation and take advantage of the creativity of the group you can use the brainstorming technique, by asking everyone to propose possible names and ideas for a logo representing the coop working project identity on the market. The final decision will be democratically taken, applying the cooperative democratic principle "one member-one vote".

Here we briefly explain the process of brainstorming technique:

1. Ask everyone to individually write down on some post-its, in 10 minutes, several ideas on the possible names of the coop working project and the sketches of possible logos. Then, stick the post-its on the white Canvas or directly on the wall.

TWO VERY IMPORTANT RULES:

a. Ensure that in this phase the group keeps silent, no discussion is allowed among members, they need to individually contribute to the activity. You can relax the atmosphere with background music.

b. This is a creative phase and every idea is welcome and useful (even the ones who may seem eccentric, bizarre and without apparent logical sense). No proposal should be discarded and no comment or opinion about other ideas are allowed during this stage of the process.

2. Ask the group to organise the different ideas in homogeneous categories or groups: you can either ask a member of the group to facilitate this action or facilitate it by yourself. Again, no comments or discussion about the content of the ideas is allowed at this stage.

3. Guide the group discussion about the different ideas that emerged from the collective creativity process: first analyse ideas on the basis of their own strengths and weaknesses, without comparing them with those of the others. Then try to stimulate a reflection about how an idea could benefit from other ones: are there any common point, similarity or complementarity that can be interesting for your coop working project?

4. Finally, facilitate the group decision about the idea or ideas that emerged as being the most adequate to represent the coop working project and celebrate them as a collective achievement. Again, if no consensus is possible, you can ask the group to vote for the idea they consider the most representative one.

Congratulations, now you have a name and the sketch of a logo for your coop working project! Let's move to the next activity that will allow you to distribute the tasks and roles within the project and decide, for example, who will be in charge of working on the final version of the name and the logo presentation.





Structure coopéCooperative structure (40')

The way in which cooperatives are organised responds to a double challenge:

- Effectively perform the coop activity in order to both satisfy clients' needs and be economically viable and competitive in the market, like any other type of enterprise.
- Consistently organise members' participation in the coop management in accordance with the cooperative principles in order to maintain democracy, cohesion and motivation within the cooperative team.

Worker cooperatives, whose primary mission is to provide their members with jobs, are cooperatives characterised by the fact that the majority of their workers are members-owners who hold the majority of the shares (at least 51%). Their governance and functioning reflect the double nature of members' participation: they are at the same time workers and owners of the organisation, contributing democratically both to its operational functioning and strategic management.

In order to better understand the cooperative structure and functioning within a worker cooperative, we propose you the Focus Point about Cooperative Structure and Governance **[STEP 3 - FOCUS POINT – COOP STRUCTURE]**.

Design your own coop working project organigram ('60 min)

It is time to move to action!

How will you organise your own coop working project structure?

Who will be doing what? How many teams? How will you divide roles and responsibilities?

We suggest you taking decisions according to the following steps:

a) Define all the members of your coop working project. Who is in?

We hope that the whole class will take part to the project, but remember the first cooperative principle "Voluntary and open membership" which states that 'Cooperatives are voluntary organisations'.

Remember that, although we focus here on worker cooperatives that are characterized by a predominant type of membership (worker-members), workers can be one type of members among others within the so-called "multi-stakeholder cooperatives" including different types of members within a given community (workers, but also users, volunteers, associations, municipalities, etc.).





Most often these cooperatives are social cooperatives used as a tool for community and social development (social or environmental services, education, culture, etc.). **Do you remember the characteristics of social coops mentioned in Step 2 of the trainer's guide?**

This means that, when defining its own coop working project, the class can invite even teachers, parents and other organisations as members of a common project.

So, in the first section of the template we provide you **[STEP 3 –TFS 1– COOP ORGANIGRAM]** just write the names, or, even better, paste the pictures of all the assembly members (and divide them in different membership categories if it is appropriate for your project).

Now that your project and membership is defined you are ready for your first General Assembly so don't wait, move on to the next steps! Do not forget that democracy reigns supreme in a cooperative so, like in any General Assembly, every decision should be democratically approved by members.

Note for the trainer: if anyone in your participants' group is not willing to take part, do not panic! Just ask him/her to participate in the sessions as an observer and discuss with the group the conditions under which he/she could take part to the coop project later. Enthusiasm in participating is a much stronger leverage than coercion.

b) Create the teams that will perform all the tasks your coop working project needs. Each team could have a specific role or be responsible for a specific activity or department within your project.

In the template **[STEP 3-TFS 1– COOP ORGANIGRAM]** we indicated the most common roles usually covered within cooperatives, but be creative and adapt the format to your own needs!

We suggest you creating the teams in the following way:

1. The whole group decides the basic management roles the project needs to perform its activity. These roles will constitute the coop project teams: ensure that they are not too many, since a lean and simple structure is easier to manage and more effective (we would recommend maximum 5 teams).
2. Write the name of the roles/teams in different A4 papers and stick them on different walls in the classroom. Then, ask participants to move under the paper indicating the role that fits best their competences and aspirations.
3. If there are roles/teams that have not enough members, you can ask the whole group to collectively solve the problem and decide which members should move from the largest teams to the smallest ones. If the whole group is not capable to solve the problem, make participants think upon the need to give priority to the project interest, rather than to their individual ones. Then, you can propose to raffle the members that should be moved to other teams. Make sure everyone understands and agrees the procedures of the raffle and commits to respect its results.





4. Leave the teams to build up or exchange members for 5 minutes and then celebrate their definitive constitution.

c) Appoint a leader for each team

Ask each team member to agree on a leader that will be part of the Management Committee. The leaders of each team will constitute the Management Committee. Alternatively, the teams can identify one person to be the Manager.

Clarify that the Managing Committee (or the Manager) hasn't more power than other members and he/she can be replaced at any moment. Its role is to supervise and coordinate the day-by-day activities of the cooperative.

d) Vote for the President of the coop working project

Finally, the assembly will vote for its president. We decide to leave this role to the end because we consider it should not be too predominant in the cooperative structure. We propose that the president is elected among those members who have not been designated as leaders in any team, so that new leaderships can emerge and shyer and less extroverted people will have a chance to assume responsibility.

NOTE FOR THE TRAINER: The General Assembly also votes for its Board of Directors, among voluntary candidates among members. The role of the Board is very important since it decides the strategic goals of the cooperative that have to be translated into operational activities by the Managing Committee, or the Manager. However for a matter of simplicity, we suggest you not to include this election in the activity with students: it is easier if all the decisions are taken in the Assembly. However, if you want to know more about how the Board of Director works you can check our **[STEP 3 – FOCUS POINT- COOP STRUCTURE!]**

5

Statute Creation (80')

The statute is the “law” of the cooperative and represents a sort of contract between the cooperative and its own members. Indeed, it enlists in detail the rules, duties and rights that cooperative members must comply with. Each cooperative must have a statute to comply with the law provisions.

In order to create it, we provide you two different tools:

- **STEP 3 – TFS 2- STATUTE TEMPLATE**, is a template with the main points that are usually contemplated in the cooperative statutes. This tool will guide you in the redaction of your own coop working project statute.
- **STEP 3 – TFS 3- STATUTE CHECK** is a template allowing you to check whether the rules you defined are aligned and coherent with the cooperative principles.





What did we learn? (20')

Here you have an interactive quiz to test participants' learning about the topics covered in step 3. It is fun and interactive!

Then, here is a summary of the main learning points of step 3 to help you keep on track during the journey. [STEP 3 – LEARNING POINTS RESUME](#).

STEP 3 DESIGNING THE WORKER COOP FUNCTIONING MODEL



Content	Time	Activity - Methodology	Ressources	Matériaux	Skills developed	Coop principles related
Define the coop working project name and logo	60'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Work in different groups • Group review and discussion 	• Trainer's guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markers • Post-its • White canvas or a blank wall in the room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity • Imagination • Group decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic member control • Autonomy and Independence
Cooperative structure, focus on: – Coop governing bodies – Double condition: workers and owners participation	40'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposition - Lecture • Group review and discussion 	• STEP 3 – FOCUS POINT – COOP. STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print FOCUS POINT (one copy per participant) or project it with a Data Show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic member control • Member economic participation • Autonomy and independence
Cooperative structure, focus on: – The coop organigram	60'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work • Negotiation and vote • Group review and discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer's Guide • STEP 3 – TFS 1 – COOP ORGANIGRAM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print TFS 1 – COOP ORGANIGRAM or use a Data Show • A4 papers • Markers • PC and photo camera 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group decision making • Self – organisation skills • Planning skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary membership • Democratic member control • Autonomy and independence
Statute creation	80'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in groups • Group discussion and review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainer's Guide • STEP 3- TFS 2 – STATUTE TEMPLATE • STEP 3 – TFS 3 – STATUTE CHECK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print TFS 2- STATUTE TEMPLATE AND TFS 3 – STATUTE CHECK or Use Data show • A4 papers • Markers • PC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the rules • Decision making • Taking Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary membership • Democratic member control • Autonomy and independence • Education, training and information
What did we learn?	20'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group reflection • Coop-game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEP 3 – LEARNING POINTS RESUME • Coopgame 	Internet connection	Total time 260'	

