DEMYSTIFYING DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES

- ◄ Explore and define "development" and "entrepreneurship," as well as how these concepts are different in a cooperative context

- ◄ Provide a basic overview of the cooperative development process using the "Cooperative Development Continuum."

TIME

- ◄ **45-90 minutes:** When needing to move through the content quickly, a basic presentation with some discussion of the information can be accomplished in forty-five minutes.

- ◄ **Add 15-20 minutes:** If beginning or ending your engagement with a group using this training, you will need to incorporate an opening and/or a closing session similar to those in "Beginning the Work" and "Bringing It All Together," respectively. Refer to those sections for tips on how to introduce and close workshops.

PREPARATION

SUPPLIES

- ◄ Chart Paper
- ◄ Markers (Chart)

POSTERS

- ◄ Cooperative Development Continuum Components

MATERIALS

- ◄ Cooperative Development Continuum

ADAPTATIONS

◄ **Group Size:** For the Cooperative Development Curriculum activity, you will need participants to manage twenty total components that they will have to organize into a continuum.

→ If working with a group smaller than twenty, ask participants to manage more than one component at a time or structure the activity akin to doing a puzzle on a table (i.e. have the group look at all the components at the same time together).

→ If you have a larger group, you may want to assign two to four participants to leadership roles tasked with managingthe pairing and ordering processes, or you may want to prepare two sets of Continuum Components and have the groups "compete" to see who can get done first.

Given that this activity requires a great deal of cooperation, you can also be creative in using the activity itself to generate learnings about the practice of cooperating in a group work scenario.

DEFINING DEVELOPMENT

In this presentation, you will unpack and explore the many definitions of the words "development" and "entrepreneurship" before applying it to the cooperative model and movement. Then, draw observations about common perceptions of these concepts and how they are different in the context of cooperation.

1. **FORM PAIRS:** Ask people to turn to the person next to them to share their thoughts on the following discussion question.

2. **ASK:** What are some definitions or concepts of development with which you are familiar?

3. **BRING THE GROUP BACK TOGETHER:** Bring the group's attention back to you and ask for participants to share what they discussed.

   A. **RECORD RESPONSES:** As participants respond, write answers on a piece of chart paper. Some examples of definitions are as follows - e.g. personal growth, real estate acquisition and renovation, economic development, business development, etc.

   B. **ACTIVELY DEMYSTIFY:** Many concepts of development are rather opaque, so be sure to demystify and explain (or ask the group to explain) what each offered response is (e.g. development as a form of fundraising).

3. **ASK:** Are any themes or patterns evident in the responses?

   A. **DRAW OUT THEMES:** Ensure to draw from the conversation that many of our commonly known concepts of development are -
      - **$$$:** Most development concepts are about growing assets that can be measured monetarily (e.g. fundraising, real estate).
      - **Benefit Some At Cost To Others:** Some practices that are referred to as development only benefit a small subset of people in a system or community, and can disenfranchise others. The perhaps most frequent example of this issue playing out in development is well encapsulated in the difference in the following two terms often used by different groups to describe the same process:

        » **Gentrification (n.):** The restoration and upgrading of deteriorated urban property by middle-class or affluent people, often resulting in displacement of lower-income people.
        » **Economic Development (n.):** The sustained, concerted actions of communities and policymakers that improve the standard of living and economic health of a specific locality.

4. **FORM PAIRS:** Ask people to turn to the person next to them to share their thoughts on the second discussion question.

5. **ASK:** Let's zoom in on "business development" and the role of the person within that practice - entrepeneurs. Who are entrepeneurs that are well known in popular culture or that you know personally?

6. **BRING THE GROUP BACK TOGETHER:** Bring the group's attention back to you and ask for participants to share the names of the people - ask for descriptions or reflections on the people mentioned.

   A. **RECORD RESPONSES:** As participants respond, write answers on a piece of chart paper.

7. **ASK:** Do these people share any characteristics? What are some themes or messages you've heard about these instances of entrepreneurship?

   A. **DRAW OUT THEMES:** Ensure to draw from the conversation that many of our commonly known concepts of entrepreneruship are -
      - **Identity & Privilege:** Most examples of entrepreneurs readily known by people are men. In US popular culture, most of the "entrepreneurs" are white, college-educated, cis-gender, and wealthy men - as demonstrated by a 2013 study from the National Bureau of Economic Research.
      - **Individualistic:** The "Lone Wolf" narrative suggests an aggressive individual approach. This; however, is never true - creating an entity always takes more than one person, despite people identifying as a sole founder.
      - **"Risking it All:"** The "pulling yourself up by your bootstraps" is a very American notion that entrepreneurs - even those with very little means - need to risk everything they have to build their business. This is not true - the above mentioned 2013 study also found that 80% of start-up cash came from familial wealth.

8. **DISCUSS:** Transition the group into a bigger discussion about the feelings they have related to the two concepts you just explored -
   - Given the discussion up to this point, how does this make you feel about development and entrepreneurship in our society?
   - Is there a relationship between these concepts and the Profit Paradigm (from "Cooperation 101")?
   - Might or might not some of these aspects of Development and entrepreneurship change in an explicitly cooperative context? How?

   A. **RECORD RESPONSES:** As participants respond, write answers on a piece of chart paper.

B. **DRAW OUT THEMES:** Ensure to draw from the conversation the following key ways in which adding "Cooperative" changes the concepts from the conventional notions of Development and Entrepreneurship. Some examples relating to Entrepreneurship are as follows:

- **Entrepreneurship can be collective:** It is possible to start-up an enterprise as a group, in fact, it is often more feasible for the entrepreneurs to do it in a supportive group structure.

- **Collectivize risk to minimize it:** By working together with others, you can pool resources in order to try to develop a cooperative project without any individual putting everything they have on the line. While there is still risk, it can be minimized by sharing it with each other.

- **More inclusive:** Since Cooperative Entrepreneurship processes don't involve "risking it all" or dedicating the majority of a single person's waking hours to developing the enterprise, the process is more accessible to those with fewer resources (e.g. low-income) or less flexible time (e.g. parents).

9. ASK: Where can you see yourself in conventional concepts of Development and Entrepreneurship? And, where can you see yourself in cooperative concepts of Development and Entrepreneurship?

A. **RECORD RESPONSES:** As participants respond, write answers on a piece of chart paper.

B. **GENERATE EMPOWERMENT:** These two questions are intended to get people envisioning themselves as cooperative entrepreneurs or in empowered roles in cooperative development processes. Respond to the reflections of participants in a way to affirms the potential of everyone in the room to be a cooperative entrepreneur.

DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

This section and the continuum model serve as a way to breakdown the complexities of the cooperative development process into smaller, more comprehendible pieces. The Cooperative Development Continuum, comprised of ten different steps, serves as a roadmap to orient someone to where they are, have been, and have yet to go, as a cooperative entrepreneur, in their cooperative development process and thinking.

1. **FRAME:** Introduce this section as a way to get a basic overview of all that the cooperative development process can entail for an entrepreneur. Frame the goal of the session as a basic understanding of the process; not to move through each step of the continuum in great detail.

2. **PRESENT:** Explore the definition of "continuum" and describe why it is especially descriptive of the cooperative development process –

   > » **Continuum (n.):** A continuous extent, succession, or whole, no part of which can be distinguished from neighboring parts except by arbitrary division.[2]

3. **ASK:** Are there any other processes that you know of that act in the way described in the defintion for Continuum?

4. **INTRODUCE THE CONCEPT OF THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM:** Share that the Cooperative Development Continuum is the process by which people start or improve cooperatives. By broadly understanding cooperative development as an ongoing process, it becomes easier to orient and assess your progress and work.

   → Continuum is used to describe the cooperative development process, because the phases and tasks **don't always happen in a predetermined order,** and phases often **don't neatly start and end** at the same time

5. **PASS OUT CONTINUUM COMPONENTS:** Spread the Continuum Components equitably among the participants or in a single location for folks to access (refer to the Adaptations if you have trouble managing having too many or few Continuum Components for your group). Share that their are two types of components → Phases and Descriptions. There is one Description for every Phase.

   A. **READ OUTLOUD**: As you are distributing or arranging the components, read them outloud - either by reading them yourself or asking the folks each participant to read outloud the component you hand them.

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2 wordnik.com/words/continuum

6. **PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS:** Direct participants to move around the room to find the match to whatever component they hold. Once they have their partner, have them sit down or move to the edges of the space to indicate they are done.

7. **BRING THE GROUP BACK TOGETHER:** As most of the participants seem to have a match, bring the group back together for a reportback. If the group seems to be having trouble finding partnership, bring the group back together and work to engage folks in collectively exploring possible connections.

8. **REPORTBACK & DISCUSSION:** Going around the room, have each pair or group read their Phases and Descriptions outloud. If participants object to certain matchings, allow them to discuss it.
   • **Note:** Try not to use this time to correct or advise on matchings, but do share that any uncertainty about pairings may be more easily resolved when going through the next continuum creation step of the activity (i.e. the group does not have to be totally certain of their pairing before moving to the next step).

9. **ASK:** Is everyone satisfied with the matching as they are arranged now?

   → If the group is satisfied - move onto the next step.
   → If the group or some individuals are not satisfied - ask for those who are unsatisfied to talk through their thinking until you can get the group to consensus about moving to the next step. By asking explicitly for consent, you'll draw out folks with differeing ideas but who may have been hesitant to propose them in the informal group process.

10. **PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS:** Direct the group to dialogue with one another to coordinate the placement of their components combinations into a continuum that makes sense to them. Provide only minimal logistical or administrative input - i.e. let the group put their components up where they think they belong and to do it as they see fit (practicing cooperation!).

11. **REPORTBACK & DISCUSSION:** Going around the room, have each pair or group read their Phases and Descriptions outloud in order. If participants object to certain matchings or the order of phases, allow them to discuss it together and rearrange themselves, as desired.

12. **ASK:** Is everyone satisfied with the pairings and arrangement of the components?

   → If the group is satisfied - move onto the next step.
   → If the group or some individuals are not satisfied - ask for those who

are unsatisfied to talk through their thinking until you can get the group to consensus about moving to the next step.

The following is provided for ease of reference - refer to the Appendix for a larger version.
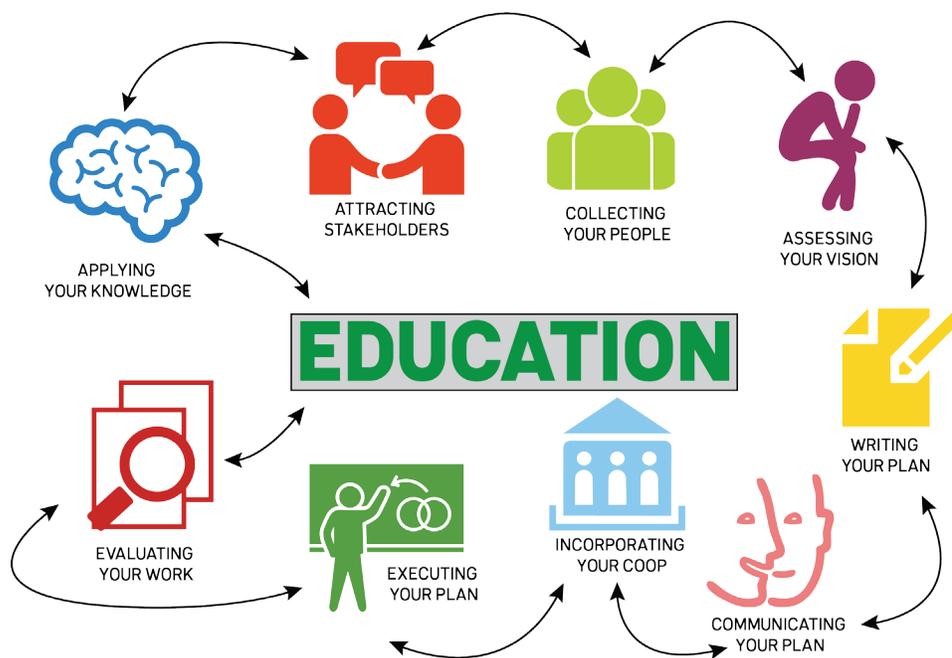
13. **SOLICIT REFLECTIONS:** Ask for any immediate reflections on the Continuum as presented.

   A. **SHARE AMENDMENTS**: If any of the phases aren't positioned or matched correctly, share how they are otherwise intended. Ask if that makes sense to participants. It is your choice whether or not you "correct" the visual continuum created by participants.

   B. **SHARE THAT THIS CONTINUUM IS VARIABLE:** The continuum presented is **an estimation of an ideal cooperative development situation.**
   - Some cooperative developers choose to modify an old adage to address the flexibility of the cooperative model, which contributes to the uniqueness of each cooperative, **"When you've seen one cooperative, you've seen... one cooperative."** This remains true of the cooperative development process, as well. There is no perfect way to fill out the continuum or move through it in real life.
   - An overall **timeline for a development project is hugely variable**. It can stretch from weeks to years, depending on a number of factors.

14. ASK: How might this differ from a conventional business development process? What steps might be unique to cooperative development and entrepreneurship?

    A. DRAW OUT PATTERNS: Specifically, ensure that the group draws out that the steps involving people and community engagement are those present in cooperative entrepreneurship processes, and typically absent in conventional development processes.

15. DISCUSS: The process the group just undertook was a group work process akin to "Applying Your Knowledge" - where you're moving your personal learnings and reflections into a group organizing process. It is important to be aware of how we operate as individuals in those processes.

- How cooperative did you feel the process was?
- Where there things you think could have been done better?
- Did you share those ideas at the time?
- Why or why not?

16. PROVIDE CLOSING REFLECTION: Share that cooperation and group process happen in our lives every day - sometimes we notice and sometimes we don't, sometimes there are explicit guidelines to support us in cooperating and sometimes there aren't, sometimes the steps we must take to achieve success are clear and sometimes they aren't. If using the next section, reference that the group will be exploring these dynamics more deeply then.