



## GOOD REASONS TO COOP

A cooperative enterprise is not the perfect enterprise, but it is an entrepreneurial model that can meet your work necessities or aspirations because of its specific features and peculiarities. In this focus point you will find out some very good reasons to coop! At the end of the reading you have also the possibility to think about your good reasons, see how they match with your ambitions and priorities and check some examples of how these reasons are concretely applied in coopworking projects from different countries.

### Be several to work together

The coopworking enterprise allows you to be autonomous but not left alone inside the job market. In this way, you fairly share responsibilities, ideas, projects, expenses and profits, but also joys and concerns. Team working allows cooperative entrepreneurs to achieve more than the sums of their individual contributions, supporting each other in the difficulties of the journey and finding together better and more creative solutions to grow their business. At the same time, they join their talents to develop a business where they fairly share power, decisions and money.

### Save our job & Workers Buyout – become the owners of the enterprise

The cooperative model favours the employment safety: it has been studied that generally, with a very high persistence rate, workers still have their work places safeguarded five years after the creation of the cooperative. Worker cooperatives promotes the assumption of responsibility and it educates to active participation: democratic participation is fundamental in the mainstream of work of cooperative enterprises. The workers are also employers of the enterprise and not only simple employees: they take care of the enterprise trends and share the mission, choices and objectives.

A worker cooperative allows the phenomenon of “workers buyout”: the enterprise takeover and control by a group of workers. This innovative modality allows an enterprise to be undertaken by workers in the attempt to “save” it. For instance, this applies to enterprises which are about to go out of business, and allows workers to keep their work place and do not scatter the skills gained during years of work.



## It values profit as a means and not as a main goal

In the worker cooperative enterprise, the satisfaction of members' needs is put ahead of profit. Surplus is pursued to equitably compensate the work of members and contributes to the capital increase and the growth of the enterprise through indivisible reserves and fund. In this way, it is possible to realize investments and create further opportunities in terms of employment and services. A cooperative enterprise main goal is not represented by profit: earnings are reinvested for the development of the cooperative itself, in order to guarantee its continuity and growth.

## Another relationship with work

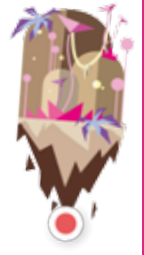
In the model of a coopworking business enterprise, relation to work is different from the traditional model of working for a boss: here, the worker is his/her own boss and time manager. In addition, relations are more equal rather than hierarchical and the worker is recognized to have real responsibilities and real opportunities to develop his/her own ambitions.

## Sustainability and local anchoring of employment

The creation of a coopworking enterprise allows workers to stay and live in the location where he/she wants to. In this kind of enterprise, the worker is not subjected to decisions from the top: for instance a change of work location cannot be imposed to the worker, as it sometimes occurs in case of saving on production costs and taxation. Indeed, workers themselves can decide where and in which conditions they work. The decision-making power remains within the company. In all countries, worker cooperatives perform better than the average firm in terms of sustainability. When the cooperative enterprise makes profits, half or almost half of them is set aside and these reserves remain within the company: they are not paid out in dividends. As a result, the cooperative is more financially stable, it reassures clients, its outside investors and its employees.

## Belonging to a network

Cooperatives never act alone: they strengthen each other by working together through local, regional, national and international structures. There



is a long tradition of finding innovative solutions inside the cooperative movement which is built upon the 6th cooperative principle: inter-cooperation. The most significant are the creation and development of support institutions providing advisory services, horizontal groups and financial instruments. These measures constitute the major source of cooperatives development because they come “from the inside” and are designed to meet their specific developmental and competitiveness needs.

## Finding a legal status adapted to a sustainable project development

You dream to work in a project that makes sense. You dream a project which is useful for the community, a social or an environmental project that can increase life quality in our society. If you carry out this plan in your own business with some other people, you will need a legal status for your business which is consistent with your objectives. The coopworking way allows you to enter the market while both taking care of the profit of your business and of community needs.

## Green light to imagination!

Cooperative enterprise means collaboration and creativity. It allows people to imagine, create, plan and design a work project, either shared or autonomous. Those who opt for a cooperative kind of enterprise, have the possibility to fulfil their dream projects without the fear of being alone, sharing not also fears and risks but also satisfactions and victories with the other associate workers. Every member can give its unique and personal contribution and, thanks to the team work, has the opportunity to develop a concrete and sustainable project.

## ▶ ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS

### Question: Are these good reasons significant for you?

Task: Compare these good reasons with your work ambitions/priorities and grade each of them from 1 to 5 (where the range goes from 1 = not interesting for me, to 5 = very interesting for me)

If you want to get inspired by some good examples, see the best practices of Italy, Spain and France here! ([Link to the page of coops examples](#)).