

YOUTH AND COOPERATIVES IN THE AMERICAS

Cases of juvenile inclusion in
the cooperative sector

306.344.084.207.22
C776j Cooperativas de las Américas
Juventud y cooperativismo en América: casos de integración juvenil en el sector cooperativo / Cooperativas de las Américas. Costa Rica : Coop/ Américas, 2019.
68 páginas, Ilustraciones a color
ISBN 978-9968-13-066-0

1. COOPERATIVISMO. 2. JUVENTUD. 3. AMÉRICA. 4. ESTUDIO DE CASO I. Cooperativas de las Américas. II. Título

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Photo of the President of Cooperatives of the Americas with the Regional Youth Committee (CRJ). November 20th, 2019. From left to right Limberg Vázquez (Member of the CRJ), Angélica Soberanes (President of the CRJ), Julia Cofreces (South Subregional Coordinator of the CRJ), Graciela Fernández (President of Cooperatives of the Americas), Leidy Restrepo (Member of the CRJ), Verónica Morales (Treasurer of the CRJ) and María Eugenia Pérez (President of the ICA World Committee on Gender).

”

This material represents an effort by Cooperatives of the Americas to learn about, systematize, and improve the actions aimed at youth integration of our cooperatives.

The eight case studies are a sample of our rich diversity, as well as the enormous potential represented by the possibility of channeling the spirit of youth of the Americas through our cooperative sector.

The systematized experiences account for a living reality that crosses the youth of the continent and augur to increase the cooperative projection at a global level; in this case generating responses to the specific demands of the new generations, or developing their own labor projects in a cooperative manner.

Understanding what our young people demand, generating specific responses and especially the specific spaces for them to become involved in managing their own cooperative destinations should be a permanent obligation of Cooperatives of the Americas.

In a predominantly youthful but highly exclusive continent, cooperatives are one of the best responses to integrate youth into a life project that allows their full development and actively involves them in transforming our continent.”

**PHD. GRACIELA FERNÁNDEZ – PRESIDENT
OF COOPERATIVES OF THE AMERICAS**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This case study was carried out within the framework of the Partnership between the International Cooperative Alliance and the European Commission, with important contributions from young cooperators from the Americas and various organizations in the cooperative sector.

Cooperatives of the Americas would like to deeply thank the advisory committee: Angélica Soberanes, Carlos Medrano, Liseth Guzmán, Victoria Solero, Leidy Restrepo, Pierre-Anne Turmel and Alicia Chávez; who visited each of the case studies of this investigation to collect the information presented below, led by Lauren Naranjo and Róger Chávez.

In addition, we appreciate the availability and attention to the advisory committee by each of the eight organizations that were part of the case studies to carry out this research.

PREAMBLE

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN A POPULATION OF GREAT INTEREST SINCE THE BEGINNING, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO GUARANTEE THE "GENERATIONAL CONNECTION OR INTEGRATION", BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY CAN REVITALIZE ORGANIZATIONS WITH ORIGINAL PROPOSALS, MORE AND MORE SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE, NEW FORMS OF WORK, NEW TECHNOLOGIES, ETC.

Or rather: better put them before change and tune them to trends, practices, and visions of the present world, of big impact for them. The majority of cooperatives and institutions that work in favor of the model are channeling various efforts, precisely to include young people, some in a more structured way and others in an incipient way or with some difficulties, and with all the challenges that this state poses, it is paramount to systematize all this experience, to discern how much has been done and what still needs to be done.

To define how the ideal scenario of the relationship between cooperatives and young people should be, so to encourage their participation, this document focuses on three main objectives:

1. Know the characteristics that identify today's generations: elements, trends and contemporary dynamics that differentiate them from young people of 10 years ago. Recognize their distinctive features, allows to have a much clearer and strategic objective, when designing programs and politics. It is necessary to know them in order to meet their needs and expectations regarding employment, education, etc.

2. Realize an assessment on how this relationship between young people and cooperatives in America is, indicating learnings on:

- What place they occupy
- What difficulties and strengths have experimented, on one hand, cooperatives in the process of inclusion of young people and on the other hand, young people forming their own cooperatives.

- Strategies implemented in the field, both successful and unsuccessful, that may serve as reference to replicate, ameliorate or correct in the future.

3. Identify strengths and opportunities that cooperatives and young people have in order to perform a good work on the subject.

To resolve these objectives, a qualitative research has been performed, mainly supported by 3 materials of investigation:

- Eight *Case Studies* on cooperatives of different countries of America (Mexico, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Canada, Dominican Republic and Peru).
- Knowledge and experience of young cooperativist leaders, members of the Consultative Committee of Cooperatives of the Americas.
- Knowledge and previous studies of external consultants of Etnológica.

In this opportunity the opinions of young people were favored, so that it would be them to speak of their experience and discuss "knowingly" on possible routes to follow. An approach to members and representatives of cooperatives was also promoted, who offered a closer view of what happens in their organizations.

Methodologies and types of qualitative analysis were implemented, because they allow to better understand the behavior of any population. Unlike the quantitative research which tries to address questions like: How many? Where? With what

frequency? the qualitative research worries about the How? the Why? and for what purpose? Specifically, from ethnography, the idea was taken that knowing the "other" through direct interaction: visiting, discussing with members of a social group (prioritizing their motivating and inhibiting factors, emotions, beliefs, perceptions and behaviors), and observing them in their environment, offers a much more complete image of what they are, do and think.

The central methodology of the research was the case study. In total eight developed by the advisory committee in their respective countries, on cooperatives that due to their particular characteristics and experiences with the youth issue, can be extrapolated to cooperatives in the rest of the continent, without being the opinions¹ and experiences representative of the sector as a whole.² These were:

Cooperativa CSN, Mexico (by Angélica Soberanes). Cooperative of Savings and Credit with main office in San Nicolás, Nuevo León, Mexico. Presents a high percentage of young workers and associates (under 35 years of age). One of them is the representative of the board of directors, and also member of the Youth Cooperative Committee of Mexico (Jovenmex). They recently created their own committee, *Acción Juvenil CSN* (Juvenile Action CSN) and their managers are very committed to what they call a "responsible, with conviction and planned" generational connection.

Industrias integradas, Colombia (by Leidy Restrepo). Cooperative of Associated Work, that works in the field of dressmaking, with seats inside rural communities in

1. Throughout the document, the opinions of interviewed young people are presented, who are not identified in order to safeguard their confidentiality.

2. The study faces the challenge of addressing a very wide and unlike universe of variables and cases that express the situation of young people and cooperativism. In general, they differ enough due to multiple variables like: Culture and strength of cooperativism in each country, service and experience of each cooperative, the types of cooperatives and fields they operate in. Nevertheless we identified important milestones that characterize them all.

the department of Valle del Cauca. Was founded in 1974 and has 379 associates, 60% of whom are young. In 2017 they approved the creation of a group of young people in each seat.

Marroneo, Puerto Rico (by Victoria Solero). Cooperative of Associated Work of students of the School of Architecture of the University of Puerto Rico, committed to selling materials of architecture and printings. Founded in 2015, at present has 84 members.

Coopevictoria, Costa Rica (by Liseth Guzmán). Industrial Agricultural Cooperative of producers of sugar and coffee, founded in 1943. Was the first cooperative of Costa Rica and at present has almost 3,000 associates. Has a well enough structured program for young people called *Nuevas generaciones* (New generations), for young associates, relatives and workers under 35 years of age.

Cambá, Argentina. Cooperative of Associated Work that works on technology, integrated by developers, technicians and artists who create web developments, mobile applications, interfaces, consultancies, design and implementation of platforms of Physical Computing. They offer technological solutions for events, artistic productions and interactive facilities. They show interest for social matters and implement many initiatives like workshops on technology, in order to include young people and the community.

Coopsco, Canada (by Pierre-Anne Turmel). Coopsco is a network that includes more than 60 School Cooperatives that are present in more than 90 schools, with establishments of library services (they can count on 16 accredited libraries, points of sale of school materials and establishments of food services in middle schools,

high schools and universities in Quebec.

Their boards of directors and employees are mainly composed by young students and offer various trainings to them. It stands out because it benefits almost 300,000 francophone students in Quebec.

Cooeprouasd, República Dominicana (by Carlos Medrano). Cooperative of Savings and Credit, constituted in the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo in 1977, by masters of the institution. Later it allowed the children of the associates and the students of the university to participate, and at present counts 25,000 associates.

Credicoop Luz y Fuerza, Peru (by Alicia Chavez). Cooperative of Savings and Credit, integrated by workers of the associated companies, located in Lima. At present counts 1,600 associates. In the last few years has extended membership to the children of associates with whom they created a young group to promote cooperativism.

In these cases, it was possible to know and discuss the experience of very different cooperatives. Cooperatives of productive sectors located in rural areas: *Industrias Integradas, Coopevictoria*, that specifically represent a case of agroindustrial sector; cooperatives created and managed by young people: *Marroneo* and *Cambá*; and in the remaining cases, cooperatives that make efforts to include young people in their organizations.

Additionally to the results of the case studies, the reflections discussed in the two in-person meetings of the entire work team -February 27th, 2018 in El Salvador and August 7th, 2019 in Jamaica- were included, plus a thorough bibliographic review of documents specialized on the

subject and previous studies of the International Cooperative Alliance.

The questions that motivated this study were not formulated recently. The concern for the subject of young people has been recurrent and has been dealt with year after year, in different scenarios and with different initiatives: through researches, articles, meetings of all kinds between young people, statements, politics and programs inside cooperatives or at a governmental level. On one hand, this is a subject that requires continuous efforts, among other reasons, because young people's behavior and their characteristics show drastic changes in progressively shorter periods of time, and it is mandatory to adapt to them.

Nevertheless, it also must be recognized that some intents have remained "on paper" or cooperatives and inclusion bodies have not managed the subject of youth in the best way and every so often we are convened to insist about the need to execute them.

This study joins these efforts to stimulate a comprehensive action plan that may contribute in practice to strengthen the role of young people inside cooperatives.

The findings of this work present the good practices of cooperatives that have successfully integrated youth into the sector,

Currently, the conclusions of this research are being discussed by the regional cooperative youth; since these are presented as opportunities for the cooperative sector of the Americas.



YOUTH SPEAKS FROM THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE.

1

RESEARCH PROCESS



2

CASE STUDIES

2.1 GENERAL METHODOLOGY

The members of the consultative committee have reached cooperatives of America that represent successful cases or offer significant learning on the subject of interest. Once they defined their "matter of study", the research process was planned in 2 steps: one of *field work and information gathering*, and one of *analysis and completion of the report with the findings*.

Step 1: Field work and information gathering

The *Case study* combines various methodologies or techniques of information gathering, with the goal of: a) Obtaining the greatest amount of information on the subject it aims at delving into, and b) Verifying different information sources, in order to achieve a more objective approach. The techniques combined in the field work were: *in depth interview and participant observation*, that were applied in 3 types of activities:

Ethnographic visit to the cooperative: Visit and preliminary meeting with some associates that showed the organization and provided a view of its job. It consisted of a tour around the cooperative with empathic and open conversations with the goal of briefly understanding its history, organizational structure, working and relation with the subject of youth.

Ethnographic interview: Open and deep conversations, 1 or 2 hours long, with two or three members of the cooperative. Among them:

- Directors, founding partners or leaders with knowledge of the programs and processes that were implemented with young people.
- Young associates deeply included in the activities of the cooperative, or who participate and lead activities for young people. Example: the representative of the youth committee of

the cooperative.

In this kind of interviews, a high level of trust and "mutual understanding" is established, which allows to obtain honest information on the perceptions they have on the addressed subjects. To accomplish them an *Interview guide* was previously designed, taking into account the *Focal points of interview* and the *Initial hypotheses*.

Empathic approach: Participation to an event or activity realized by young people of the cooperative, in which the researcher had to pay attention to the dynamics, behaviors, addressed subjects, ways of participation and any kind of information of interest. Then, leveraging the moment, some young people were approached in a spontaneous way. This is a form of participative observation, which allowed to collect a relatively genuine or more natural image of how the programs and initiatives of young people inside the cooperative work.

Additionally, to the field activities, an exercise of **documentary review** was performed to analyze some documents of the cooperative (minutes, strategic plans, written projects, internal studies, notebooks, pedagogical material, etc.) and other external studies with which the case was contextualized.

Step 2: Information analysis and completion of the report

In this step each member dedicated themselves to systematize the findings, supported by a *Structure of analysis* designed to order them by subject, with the goal of identifying the most important ideas and record them in a written report.

The meeting of 7 August 2018 in Jamaica, gave the chance to provide a follow-up on the Case studies and strengthen the analysis with wise, self-critical and propositive discussions. In the morning, the members of the Consultative Committee shared and reviewed their preliminary advances and in the afternoon, they participated to a workshop of co-creation to discuss subjects one by one, main points of the research and define conclusions that had to be included in the final report.

Lastly each member of the Committee handed over a document, methodically synthesizing their experiences during the field work, acquired knowledge, analysis and

suggestions. This report is the result of a triangulation of all this material, discussions during the research process and previous studies that were revised.

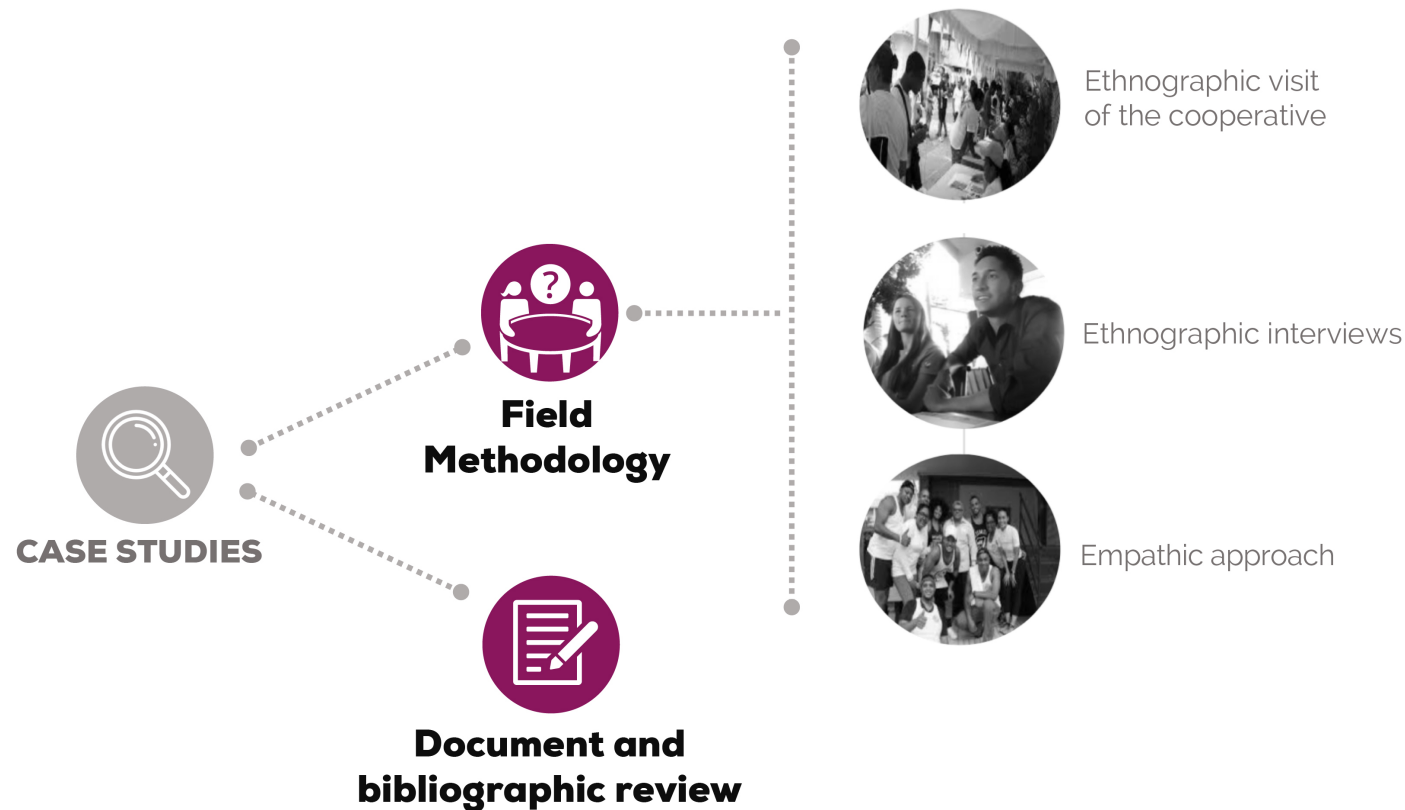


Chart on research methodologies for case studies

2.2 THE CASES

Cooperatives created by young people



MARRONEO, PUERTO RICO

2015 85 associates (students of 29 or less years of age)

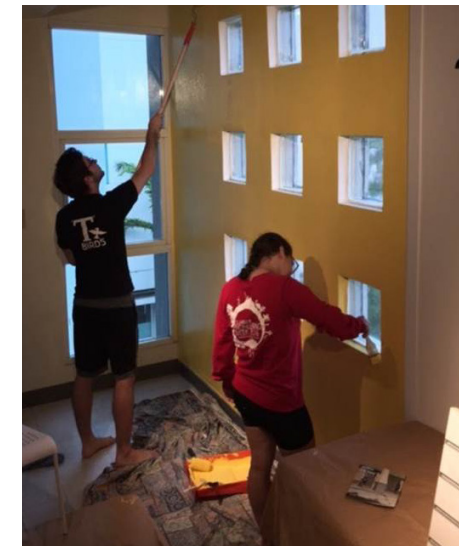
Juvenile Cooperative of Associated Work of university students of the School of Architecture of the University of Puerto Rico (Facility Rio Piedras) They manage the operations of a Cooperative Shop of materials for architecture and printing services.



Namir Cisneros, President of the Board of Directors

The case contributes to the understanding of the relationship between young people and cooperativism, because:

1. It is the only juvenile university cooperative in Puerto Rico (in accordance with the terms of the Law #220 of 2002 of Puerto Rico).
2. It is one of the 4 cooperatives within the university of Puerto Rico and it is important to assess what kind of network or joint work, they perform together.
3. It offers a view of the dynamics and possibilities that are available within a university, ideal scenario to promote cooperativism among young people.
4. Due to its recent creation, it is a testimony of all that is implied in the creation of a cooperative of young people from the beginning; its strengths, challenges and particularly what is necessary in this step to consolidate their project.
5. The organization is undergoing a process of structuring; the Regulations of Marroneo establish that the Cooperative will have a Board of Directors, a Supervision Committee and an Educational Committee; nevertheless, at present it only has the Board of Directors, composed of 5 young people. This allows to analyze what challenges or strengthens the role of young people in the leadership and management of their own cooperative.



Adaptation of a new work space (after the Hurricane Maria)

Cambá

CAMBÁ, ARGENTINA

2011 29 (between 21 and 41 years of age)

Cooperative of Associated Work that works on technology, integrated by developers, technicians and artists who offer technological solutions (web developments, mobile applications, interfaces, consultancies, design and implementation of platforms) for events, artistic productions and interactive facilities. It was created by the merger of two cooperatives: CREAR and El Galpón de Banquito. Both with similar worries in the artistic and social fields. Its main seat is located in the city of Buenos Aires.

The case contributes to the understanding of the relationship between young people and cooperativism, because:

1. It follows trends, lifestyles and interests of young generations, in three ways:

- For the work they perform in the **new technologies field** and the knowledge.
- **Their critic awareness and social commitment** coincide with a wide group of young people that have these beliefs and that for the same reason could automatically identify with the cooperativist model. Their critic awareness and social commitment are highlighted by the fact that they think of new technologies as a good tool for the democratization of knowledge, that they see cooperativism as a movement that transforms reality, that they critically read the surrounding context and that they state to be committed to the reality of their country.



Creative technologies workshop

2. It has a solid organizational structure, from which successful and well planned ways of sharing work can be learned, ways of leadership and active participation in favor of the consolidation of a cooperative of young people.

In addition to the Board of Directors, they created 4 secretariats where strategic decisions are made:

- Continuous improvement and innovation (internal processes and quality).
- Labor conditions (office, regulations, coexistence, supply, rights).
- Education and training (trainings, events, hacklab, creative technologies workshop, department of education of the Federation of Self-Managed Cooperatives of Buenos Aires (FEDECABA).
- Institutional and territorial relationships (FEDECABA,



Members of the Cambá cooperative

FACTTIC, IMFC, UNQ, CO-OPERAR and social organizations.)

The organization different areas (commercial, administration and production), commissions (communication, hacklab, technical, technological and educational coordination and membership) and assembly spaces. All the associates participate in an area and a commission, and the exchange of information happens through the biweekly assem-

blies. In addition, on Monday the commission of delegates of each area meets to outline the operational tasks of the week that arise from said commissions and assemblies.

3. It stands out because it offers programs for young people and because it promotes and draws attention to cooperativism among them. They work with universities on various technological projects, where they make cooperative work known; they are visited by

secondary schools, informing about the advantages of the cooperative model; they provide information on the web. They tell their experience to inspire more young people to create cooperatives; they host free workshops on technology for everybody and participate in meetings, forums and fairs of social economy.

A SOLID ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE PROMOTES THE LEARNING OF SUCCESSFUL AND WELL-PLANNED WAYS OF DIVIDING WORK, FORMS OF LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN FAVOR OF THE CONSOLIDATION OF A YOUTH COOPERATIVE.

COOPERATIVES THAT PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE



COOPERATIVA CSN, MÉXICO

1973 347 employees and 140.000 associates

Cooperative of financial services, Savings and Credit. Its main seat is located in San Nicolás, Nuevo León, Mexico and it has 38 branch offices in two states of the country.

Its origin is a religious catholic group of Mexico that saw that popular registers under the cooperative model, were a successful way of helping the disadvantaged. After some difficulties and changes in the structure, it formally established as cooperative company in 1985 and in 2007 the National Banking Commission and of Values in Mexico (CNBV), gave them the authorization to operate as Entity of Popular Savings and Credit.

CSN is distinguished by the ability of elaborating strategies planned to include youth inside cooperatives, the structure of the organization, its processes and its objectives are very clear, and a joint work of all areas can be noticed.

Managers detected a need (the one for generational connection), created strategies to meet it and after various tries and learnings, they achieved youth integration in their government bodies and the creation of a committee of young people.

The case contributes to the understanding of the relationship between young people and cooperativism, because:

1. It is a cooperative little known in Mexico which is in a stage

of greater impact out of its region.

2. The inclusion of a young person in the Board, granted them a national award by an entity that gathers cooperatives of Savings and Loan in Mexico; CONCAMEX.
3. Since 2015 they implemented the the modality of Leadership Career to recruit young successful associates in the board of directors.
4. The CSN Juvenile Action Committee, was recently created (October 2017) and already has an important local impact through its voluntary work.
5. The growth of CSN was sustained from the beginning, the philosophy of the present

A NEED WAS DETECTED (THE GENERATIONAL CONNECTION), STRATEGIES WERE CREATED TO SOLVE IT AND AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS AND LEARNING, THEY ACHIEVED INTEGRATION.

manager who has been in charge for 30 years is conservative, but at the same time, of much planning and attention to the demands of today hence it has produced a controlled development that shows solidity to the outside.

6. In 2017 they were included with a representation in the Juvenile Cooperative Committee of

Mexico JOVENMEX which is the national committee.

This case serves as a reference for some "good practices" that may be implemented in other organizations and even present itself as an example in Mexico and later in the continent.

Focal points of the case study:

- The CSN Juvenile Action Committee.
- Leadership Career Program
- Presence of a young person in the auditing boards and their participation in JOVENMEX.



CSN Youth Action Committee with Luis Fernando Méndez, Secretary of the Supervisory Board (in black suit) and Angélica Soberanes (sitting in white blouse) President of the Regional Youth Committee of Cooperatives of the America.

CSN IS DISTINGUISHED BY THE ABILITY OF ELABORATING STRATEGIES PLANNED TO INCLUDE YOUTH INSIDE COOPERATIVES, THE STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION, ITS PROCESS AND ITS OBJECTIVES ARE VERY CLEAR, AND A JOINT WORK OF ALL AREAS CAN BE NOTICED.



INDUSTRIAS INTEGRADAS, COLOMBIA

1974 389 associates (298 women)

Cooperative of Associated Work that dedicated to the field of dressmaking. Their production factories are located in small towns and municipalities of the department of Valle del Cauca: Venecia (Trujillo), Salónica (Riofrío), La Marina (Tuluá), Caicedonia, Versalles and an administrative headquarter in the city of Cali. Was created with the aim of generating work and income opportunities especially for women in the rural areas.

Industrias Integradas outsources for national and international companies, but also work with its own brand of women's underwear, Symphony Lingerie. In this business the Cooperative participates in the whole value chain from the design, product development, purchase of raw materials and fabrics, cut, dressmaking, marketing and final sale.

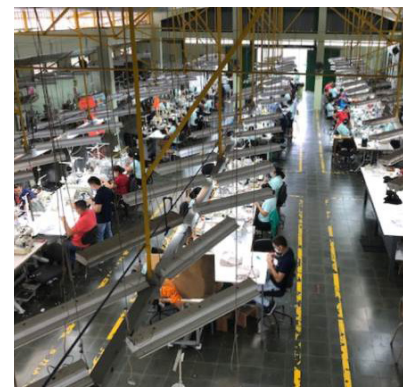
The case contributes to the understanding of the relationship between young people and cooperativism, because:

1. Almost 60% of its social base is composed by young people (under 35 years of age), hence they can guarantee a generational change, and it is important to identify what conditions favored this situation.
2. The General Assembly of Representatives of 2017 ruled, as a result of a proposal presented by a young associate of the cooperative: "That the creation of the group of young Cooperativist people be supported in each of the seats and that the Board of Directors and the leadership define the parameters for its creation". In accordance with its objectives, the project has a strong component of comprehensive Training in the Cooperative model and in particular in the one of Associated Work.

3. Being located in the interior part of small towns and municipalities, most of its members are country people, thus the case allows to define a profile of "young rural people", whose lifestyles, challenges to fit in cooperativism and needs are far from those of young people living in the city.
4. Thanks to the project of its own brand, new employment and training possibilities arose for young people in the cooperative.
5. The cooperative is interested in impacting "from inside outward" and realizes activities in the nearby rural communities, so that they may know its work model, be included and improve their living conditions, through a formal employment. This makes them a good diffuser of the model.



Industrias Integradas, Salónica headquarters



Interior of the Salónica headquarters



COOPEVICTORIA, COSTA RICA

1943 3000 associates

Industrial Agricultural Cooperative of producers of sugar and coffee, located in the province of Alajuela.

As it grew they diversified their activities and at present they have storage services of agricultural and building supplies, medical services for the associates, gas station and cemetery.

The case contributes to the understanding of the relationship between young people and cooperativism, because:

1. COOPEVICTORIA R.L. was the first cooperative to be created in Costa Rica. This fact on its own is of great historic value and importance for the study.
2. Agricultural cooperatives have suffered in the last few years, the consequences of not having implemented a generational connection in time, since their associative basis has grown older and retiring from the cooperative, which affects the

production needed to market. Moreover, in many cases the children of the associates do not wish to continue the agricultural work, which generates a negative impact in the company, especially in the decrease of product they receive.

COOPEVICTORIA R.L. is a good example of a cooperative in the process of facing this situation, implementing a well enough structured and of great impact program of young people, called Nuevas Generaciones (New Generations), one of the first programs of youth in an agricultural cooperative. Knowing this initia-

tive in detail was very helpful to think these strategic guidelines that can guide the action plans of cooperatives

3. At the same time, the case invites to reflect on the challenges that make the participation of young people in the management bodies harder. At present they have none.
4. As the case of the Cooperative Industrias Integradas, this shows the peculiar characteristics of young people in rural communities.



New Generations Program



Processing of sugar cane at CoopeVictoria R.L



COOPSCO, CANADA

1983 60 cooperatives and 400 000 associates

Network of Cooperatives of School Consumers, the first precedent of which was the Cooperative COOPSCO founded in 1940. It manages establishments of library services (they can count on 16 accredited libraries), points of sale of school materials and establishments of food services in middle schools, high schools and universities in Quebec.

It employs 1,500 student workers, who manage 114 points of sale in the territory of the province of Quebec.

The case contributes to the understanding of the relationship between young people and cooperativism, because:

1. COOPSCO is a cooperative model "by young people for young people". It involves a great number of students considering the sector it operates in. It stands out because it benefits almost 300.000 franco-phone students in Quebec.
2. This is a representative case of the theme "young people in the leadership". Its regulation ensures their participation in the governing and managing structure, because

the law on student cooperatives requires more than 50% of the leadership to be young people. All boards of directors of cooperatives that are part of the network and groups of employees are mainly composed by young people. More than 600 students are leaders in the boards (more than 50% of the management body in the boards of directors).

3. Its model has a significant economic impact in the province of Quebec. The network reached and important diversification in its sectors of activity that make 132 million CAD of income, and

6,5 million CAD of repayment to its associates (data of 2013) through:

- Bookshops, Stationary Shops, Computers.
- Cafeteria, Bus Tickets
- Multiservice Shops and Printing services.
- Accommodations for students and parking areas.



Interior of Coopsco



COOEPROUASD, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

1977 25,000 associates

Cooperative of Savings and Credit, constituted in the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo, by masters of the institution. Later it allowed the children of the associates and the students of the university to participate.

The case contributes to the understanding of the relationship between young people and cooperativism, because:

1. In 2015 the Young People Committee COOEPROUASD was formally constituted, the activities of which are focuses especially on development and participation of academic or training activities (talks, forums, workshops, etc.) inside the cooperative and at a national level, with which they try to strengthen the cooperativist values of young associates, dealing with subjects close to their interests and needs. This kind of events, besides having an educational component, allows them to strengthen their relationship with other committees or groups of young people and create important supporting networks. Some examples:

In 2015:
Along with the Social Management and the Education Com-



Zumbacoop for Health

mission of the cooperative, they had a talk on the "importance of savings, values and principles".

- In 2016:**
- They gave the speech "Elaboration and formulation of plans to start your business".
 - Participated in the IV Juvenile Cooperative Congress. "Challenges of Cooperative Companies in the Digital Era" developed by the National Committee of Young Cooperativists (CNJCOOP).

- In 2017:**
- The Committee participated in the Lecture "Technological Tools as Critical Strength in the Global Markets" held by the Dean of the Technological Institute of the Americas (ITLA) B.ENG. José Armando Tavares, organized by CNJCOOP.
 - Participation in the workshop "Leadership and assertive communication. Organized by COOEPROUASD, in the province of San Pedro de Macoris, Hotel Playa Nueva Romana.
2. The Young People Committee stands out for its active participation in meetings and juvenile inclusion bodies, of national and international significance. In 2017 they took part in the workshop for the strengthening of groups of young people that are included in the National Cooperative Board CONACOOOP,

COOEPROUASD WAS ONE OF THE FIRST COOPERATIVES IN THE REGION TO HAVE A TECHNOLOGICAL PLATFORM THAT ALLOWED TO AUTOMATIZE THE ASSOCIATES TRANSACTIONS.

through CNJCOOP (National Board of Young Cooperatives).

- Every year the Committee realizes an activity called Zumbacoop por la Salud (Zumbacoop for Health), a big event of aerobic rumba, in which companies committed to health like Universal fitness participate, and they arrange a stand where associates can check their health conditions, measuring levels of body fat, blood pressure, among other things. Every event has an intent related to health. In 2017 for example, the activity had the intention of creating a food habit

and an exercise routine for the prevention of diabetes, arterial hypertension and cancer.

Besides coinciding with a growing interest among young people for self-care through healthy practices, it is also useful to successfully include different generations of associates of the cooperative. It is the horizontal meeting between leaderships and young people, that even works as some kind of networking, in which they converse openly, spontaneous networking is created and possible future projects are discussed.

- COEPROUASD was one of the first cooperatives in the region to have a technological platform that allowed to automatize transactions of the associates, and is making efforts to use digital means inside the cooperative, theme that others cooperatives, have not put efforts in yet.



National Board of Young Cooperativists (CNJCOOP)



CREDICOOP LUZ Y FUERZA, PERU

1961 1.600 associates, 43 Collaborators

Cooperative of Savings and Credit of Workers of the Associated Companies, located in Lima.

The case contributes to the understanding of the relationship between young people and cooperatives, because:

- It has a juvenile group supported by the administrative and executive bodies of the cooperative. This allows the group to have a continuity in time regardless of the change of leaders and collaborators.
- The way it included young people, stands out: it mainly accepts the children of the associates,

as members of the cooperative with all the rights and obligations of their parents. This case is an example of generational connection, keeping as a base an engine that promotes the cooperative philosophy from the family regardless of the age of the associates.

- Moreover, a acknowledgment and commitment to the Directive of the Assembly exists in Credicoop for the accompanying and sustained political support of young people. Following this

philosophy they allocate a budget (10% of the excess) to the youth program for the development of educational activities.

- Until 2002, very few young people were included in the boards of CREDICOOP or they did not bring themselves to cover relevant seats. Starting from 2004 and in a progressive way there was a growth in the participation of young people in the sector of representatives and managers.



Associates during an integration activity in Churin (Peru)

3

TODAY'S YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AMERICAS

Any policy, strategy or program that cooperatives wish to implement to strengthen their relationship with young people, has to start with a previous knowledge of how they are, how they relate with one another, how they face future and more elements that can allow them to closely connect with this population. The better they understand their interests, needs and expectations, the clearer the path to channel their intentions and actions will be.

This section gathers a series of reflections that contribute to define *the personality of today's young people*, covering aspects on their relationship with education, work, social and political life, expectations for the future, but also aspects on their day to day

life (relationship with digital means and technology, cultural or recreational interests, etc.)

At the same time this characterization will be contextualized according to *the specific social reality of America*. The socioeconomic and political conditions of the continent determine different realities and profiles of very particular young people. The social inequality, violence situations, different dynamics between rural and urban environments, ethnic diversity, some cultural characteristics, clearly speak about young people in America and force us to ground the image of this population with which the cooperativism in the region wants to work.

3. 1. WHO ARE THEY? Realities vs. Stereotypes

3. Bauman, Zigmunt. (2007). "Between us, the generations". En J. Larrosa (Ed.) *On Generations. On Coexistence between Generations*. Barcelona: Fundació Viure i Convivre, pp. 373.

To obtain a realistic image of what can characterize today's young people, it is necessary to avoid clichés and stereotyped ideas on them. The categories with which generations are defined, are usually limited, when not biased. They expose statements that do not apply to a group of people so wide and diverse.

The concept of **generation** speaks of a group of individuals that are born in a short period of years and share cultural elements and social events, as: values, beliefs, interests, perspectives, behaviors, civil and political rights, kinds of education and similar cultural models. Nevertheless generations are not homogeneous, they are not compact, nor can be strictly defined by a specific age range -as someone has intended them-.

According to the sociologist Zigmunt Bauman *"the limits that separate generations are not clearly defined, they cannot stop being ambiguous and transferred"*³, they coexist and partially overlap. The tastes, habits and characteristics of people of one generation may be similar to the tastes, habits and expectations of other generations.

This is why it necessary to deal cautiously with categories like *Millennials* and *Centennials*, with which today's generations of young people are defined but tend to be reductionist and homogenize them. These categories -more appropriate of marketing- elude delving into the contexts and aspects that converge in such wide generational ranges and for this prejudices, stigmas and generalizations on these young people tend to get stronger.

Before the mediatization and possible overvaluation of these two generations, it is important to take into account a not so evident phenomenon when analyzing the well-known *generations*: Undeniably in recent decades a sort of *"generational consciousness"* has existed. Human history was written based on the research and analysis of the past, of how our ancestors were, thought, what their habits and behaviors were, among other things. Nowadays social and human sciences are facing the challenge of understanding the present, today's behaviors and phenomena and, increasingly debate inferences on tendencies and future scenarios that will involve humanity. For this, in a hypercommunicating society, it is easy to spread this knowledge even though in a fragmented and perhaps abridged way.

Unlike past times in which no one was conscious of pertaining to a generation, for example, a *Baby Boomer* did not know they were one, the same can be said for someone of the GX, and going further back in time, no one living in the Romanticism knew they were living in that time; nowadays, for many, this time and generational consciousness exists: it is not unusual to hear a young person saying "we millennials...".

This has been reinforced by the development of the Internet, of networks and of media in general, that allowed the spread of many of these stereotyped concepts, achieving that a young millennial feels clearly identified and defined by such name and assumes ad their own the parameters and characteristics assigned to this generational group (as if it were their zodiac sign).

Prejudices and stereotypes. The following diagram collects a series of sayings the adults, and even some young people, usually use, to refer to the style and behaviors of today's young people:⁴

4. This list of prejudices and stereotypes was formed from the testimonies collected during the step of field work. In these sentences the opinions that different interviewed people expressed are synthesized. The knowledge and experience of consultants on this subject was also added.

<p>Their thinking diagrams and personalities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "They are disrespectful. They struggle to follow rules" • Little disciplined • They are secretive: "They tend to separate from the adults". They do not understand nor communicate with older generations. • "They want to update and change everything. Nothing seems good to them" • Their tastes and interests vary based on trends • "Some are frivolous, super light kids"
<p>Social and political conscience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of them are not interested in keeping up to date on the social and political context of their country.
<p>Their relationship with authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "They do not know, nor respect authorities"
<p>Their relationship with technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "They are digital natives." • They are addicted to digital means: "They lived clinging to mobiles and computers". • They give priority to virtual relationships, above personal ones
<p>Their projects for the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "They live in an eternal present, they are not interested in planning or designing long-term" • "They do not set clear goals. They are very apathetic" • They are not able to save, nor manage their own finances

<p>Their relationship with education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They read very little. • They are simplistic: "They do not study, nor research. The information they consult is the one summarized on the Internet", "They settle with what Wikipedia and Google say", "They do not pay attention to extensive contents anymore". • They have an attention deficit disorder: "They are so over stimulated by digital means that they are not able to concentrate on something for more than 10 minutes." • Low capacity of being surprised by something
<p>Their relationship with work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not commit to anything: "They are not loyal to any company, they do not commit and they just pass through the organization". • They take responsibilities lightly • They are inexperienced: "They have not collected sufficient knowledge nor experience to do their work properly yet". • They are not able to lead projects or take leading positions • "They all want to be independent and have their own business"

In effect, the previous attitudes or behaviors may emerge with some frequency in some profiles of young people, but through the experiences of the research, it was established that adults usually exaggerate or generalize. From a more unprejudiced and objective experience we find that actually:

- Some of these behaviors -like irreverence and impudence- **are typical of any generation in its stage of youth**, which is the more lively and impulsive of the human life. In short, rejecting youth has been a prevalent

position throughout history and adults that were criticized when they were young, now criticize younger people.

- Frequently, the persistence of these stereotyped behaviors, comes from the study and analysis of social groups **with special environments and experiences** (generally of privileged classes) that cannot fully be extrapolated to regions or social groups that live in very different contexts. For example, the great number of young zealous workers of the emerging classes.

- The publications and the *analysts*, exaggerate some characteristics with the aim of "showing" great differences with previous generations. And in practice, a generation cannot be arbitrarily be separated from another because the changes are not so abrupt, they are almost imperceptible evolutionary processes.

3. 2. CHARACTERISTICS THAT IDENTIFY YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE CONTINENT

Below, there are exposed with a more deep and connected to experience approach, a combination of characteristics and behaviors that are particularly evident in the present generation of young people and that clearly contrast with older generations. These elements are common to a great number of young people; nevertheless, it is clear that many of them, present themselves and behave in a more traditional or predictable way since they resemble the style of older generations.

Anyways, there will always be variations and differences determined by the country or region, the socio-economic environment, culture and personal life circumstances.

More stimulation and better relationships with their parents

The family composition, the raising style and the ways of communication and relate of parents with their children, has created a tendency to use certain behaviors and characteristics among today's young people that have resulted in more autonomy, risk and freedom. Some of their effects are:

- More recent generations have grown in smaller family groups where the prevalence of the traditional household (mother, fa-

ther and siblings) has diminished and where many times, both parents work.

Regardless of the type of family they have, these young people have had more flexible, relaxed and close relationships with their parents compared to previous generations.

Relationships based on submission and fear are vanishing, regardless of the tensions and the fact that they may exist in some more vulnerable surroundings of Latin American countries (presence of violence, extreme poverty, low education, etc.).

- Even though it is more typical of developed countries, it cannot be denied that since the last decades of the XX century more "healthy and affective" models of raising have been encouraged, since the stage of pregnancy. This is how many of these young people benefited of the early stimulation or the participation in multiple activities (that also kept them occupied and "compensated").

Star adolescents

In contrast to previous generations, many of these young people, lived a more understood, accepted and even major adolescence in the household. They have been more

involved in the family decision and projects, even becoming the most influential part, especially in decisions related to entertainment, technology, trips, fashion, vehicles, food, among other things. In large part, this power comes from the ability of getting information and intuitively coping with devices, applications, browsers, networks, electronic games, etc.

They have traveled more

Many of these young people had the privilege or need to travel and live other experiences far from their household. For example, some of those with more economic means, learned foreign languages in another country (especially United States) or had different kinds of studies, exchanges or excursions. In other social contexts, many young people traveled as emigrants (especially in Central America) looking for better opportunities; in other cases it was due to forced displacement and in others, to live an adventure.

Whatever their reason to travel and leave home, these experiences contributed to make them more familiar with other cultures, more autonomous and in some cases more estranged.

THE IDEA OF MANY IS TO LIVE THE PRESENT INTENSELY.

More options for university education

Decades ago, attending university was privilege of a minority. Moreover, choosing the technical or university program, was a decision that often followed pragmatic or economic purposes. The influence of parents easily turned into pressure or imposition and the adolescents did not have sufficient information sources to choose satisfactorily.

Today's young people had much more autonomy and freedom to choose their degree or technology. Even though their parents still are inevitable models, they now have a more accompanying and orienting role. The search is easier because there are many sources, invitations and events to know and compare opinions.

Educational lag and education perspectives in the region

In the last two decades, the access to higher education in the countries of the region has grown exponentially compared to the very low numbers of the 80's, so much that, in many Latin American countries, the

percentage of students with a High School Diploma is above 50%. Nevertheless, in some countries there is a worrying phenomenon of dropping out (especially in media and technology degrees) that in many cases is due to economic difficulties and the need to work instead of studying

Obviously, in the majority of the countries of the region, young people of low socioeconomic levels and of some rural sectors, have less possibilities to accede to higher education and their low qualifications do not allow them to accede to jobs that can guarantee an economic stability thus being forced to work for daily wages and in very precarious conditions. In the case of young people of the countryside and isolated populations, this is a strong reason to migrate to the cities to look for better opportunities. For this reason, the cooperative phenomenon is impending in these communities.

Another difficulty that emerges in Latin America is the preference young people have for studying traditional professions that today do not answer to the majority of

demands of industry, science, innovation and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). In Colombia, for example, more than 50% of university students, choose social sciences, business administration and law.

Regardless of these preferences, a growing interest and re-evaluation of more creative or innovative professions stand out, like: musicians, chefs, social media specialists, digital animation, photographers, products and services designers, community managers, data engineers, App developers, etc. in the same way, the new learning and collective working models have to be highlighted (explained later on).

Their relationship with technology

Of course, young people of less than 35 years of age, are native of "connectivity". It cannot be said that it is the *technological generation*, since every generation takes possession of its own technology, and thus all of them, even the more remote ones, are technological generations.

Since the early age, many are familiar with mobile phones and the Internet. Some psychological perspectives even consider them as extensions of their body that make a great part of their world (here or outside) always within reach and available. The continuous interaction on social networks, has shaped the rules and dynamics to relate, study, work, have fun and always be "in the game".

Although they are spontaneous and skilled at networks and technology, we must not exaggerate on their virtues to abuse it: they are more instinctive than meticulous or analytical.

Conception of the future

The perspective of future, especially in young professionals, is not much about building the traditional family life young people of twenty or thirty years ago dreamed of anymore.

They do not bet on the premise of living decades of sacrifices and discipline to achieve a restful retirement in the latest part of their lives. The idea of many is to live *the present* intensely, spend or invest in matters that represent experiences, satisfactions and achievements close in time.

The first kind of projects is to travel know places and people, study, have gastronomic experiences, go to parties, do sports, attend an event, etc. the following sentences, represent their perspectives: *"The desire is not to get an indefinite job, buy a house, marry soon anymore"; "The achievement is making experiences, not ensure a patrimony"*.

Many even postpone marriage, the formation of a matrimonial life and above all having children (they usually imagine it for after 30 years of age because there is a high awareness of the emotional, psychological and economical investment that having children implies.

A determining factor they are worried about for their future, is the environmental problem and the challenge of sustainability and preservation of species and of the planet. These generations of young people are much more informed, aware and active before these issues.

Leadership in society and organizations

In the various countries of the continent, we can recognize the interest of some sectors of young people who, even though are not the majority, want to belong and participate in institutions, collectives and movements that may generate transformations and well-being in their societies.

Nevertheless, the sensation that the presence of young people in leading and powerful positions is not very significant prevails; the sectors and organizations where the most representative leaders and managers are young are very few. Thus, no true generational change can be highlighted.

The difficulty of this change can be explained in two ways: on one hand, with the problem of apathy and disinterest of a majority of young people who tend toward more individualist interests. On the other

hand, the lack of will of traditional managers who do not favor the leadership of young people in their institutions is criticized.

The businesses of the private sector are those with the bigger presence of young people covering important positions or with wide projections toward the top management. Their leadership is more visible in sectors like: innovation, ICT, research, design, marketing, fashion and entertainment.

Perhaps the scenario of most leadership and prominence of young people is in the industry of startups, given that in the global scenario, Latin America stood out as a dynamic and exhaustive territory for these initiatives. The OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) estimates that at 2018 there are more than 2.000 startups in this region led by Brazil and Mexico, seconded by Colombia, Argentina and Chile.

On the other hand, the participation and leadership of young people of the continent in organizations with a more social nature (NGOs, foundations and corporations) focused especially on environmental preservation, social research, educational and cultural projects stands out.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the leadership, the ability to convene and mobilize of young university students with social causes, the defense of education and of individual rights. The peak of these movements can be highlighted in Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, among others.

3. 3. ATTITUDE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORKING WORLD

In this section a combination of reflections coming from both the speeches given in the Consultative Committee and the various researches realized by Etnológica with young people of different areas of the continent is collected. The panorama and present work conditions for young people, the difficulties and precariousness of the jobs, myths and realities about the undertaking and ability and creativity to build networks and new forms of collective work are analyzed.

Modern work: flexibility or uncertainty?

The world of work that young generations of the Continent are experiencing, implies new realities that clearly contrast with the stability and guarantees that they may have expected 2 or 3 decades ago.

Today's job options often involve a high level of uncertainty and instability. Therefore, in some cases it has become common practice to assume flexible or discontinuous contracts, such as those for the provision of services, which companies prefer to reduce costs, be more competitive and, in some cases, simply to avoid long-term commitments.

Among young people of medium to low socioeconomic levels, especially in Latin American countries, the phenomenon of brief employments is popular -in particular for transportations and courier services- like Rappi, Uber, Domicilios.com and many other apps that turn up in an disproportionate way to cover all forms of consumption of the cities. The subtle line between "opportunity" for leisure time and the pauperization of work, generates a critical debate that seems to be far from being solved. For this reason, it is a crucial situation and moment for cooperativism to find a solution or opportunity to attract young people improving their present precarious situations, such as the case of the "Up & Go" cooperative of house cleaning services in New York that is contracted through digital platforms.

Redefinition of traditional employment and businesses

Young workers, university students and recently graduated professionals, do not necessarily aim at entering in a **traditional or big business**. Unlike their predecessors, they often prefer other business, undertaking models

or smaller businesses with interesting challenges.

- It is common for them to not have a clear expectation, hope or, in some cases, not even desire to remain **in the same position for a long time**. They have accepted this idea that in the present world, a job is not for life. Which is clearly different from the hopes -and possibilities- of previous generations.

There also is a big group of young people who prefer to be independent

For a very representative group of young people, even since they began studying, their projection in the work life is more related to autonomy and self-management. For this reason, there also are many who see independence or undertaking as a path that challenges them even though they are aware that to accomplish this they have to learn inside businesses with career and experience.

Ingenious mechanisms that favor this independence

- They avoid purchasing assets

4

YOUNG PEOPLE AND COOPERATIVES: CONTEMPORARY DIAGNOSIS OF THIS RELATIONSHIP

THE OBJECTIONS TO THE UNDERTAKING DISCOURSE

- The institutions promoting the undertaking usually highlight the step by step process for the development of business ideas and are not very pragmatic and realistic in the task of understanding the market and the real commercialization options that these ideas may have in their municipalities, leading to the failure of their initiatives.
- The offer saturation because the ideas cease to be original and the demand range does not get wider.
- "We are not all born to be entrepreneurs". It is necessary to demystify undertaking as a guarantee for success and economic stability for the majority of the population.

to group, generate alliances (temporary or permanent, etc.), forms of co-working, crowd-sourcing and network. It is an irreversible tendency favored by the ICT, social networks and the ease to connect.

This is favored because today's young people, have mechanisms to generate a social activity more active and effective: bigger number of social networks, groups and contacts. And this value of the ubiquity and the *social fluency* have to be taken advantage of and strengthened starting from cooperativism.

Realities of undertaking

Only a minority manages to successfully carry out their initiatives, despite the training on undertaking they receive at the university, and even at high school.

On the other hand not all young people have the desire, ability or "the spirit" to be entrepreneurs. Various studies show that the percentage of successful undertakings is very low compared to the number of projects started.

Further ahead the experience of young people that have formed their own cooperatives and the difficulties and advantages they are faced with are delved into.

or resources that they may outsource or rent. They rent spaces, tools or equipments for a period of time or for one-time needs. They may also subcontract the tasks or services that are more profitable and efficient to them.

- A big number of today's independent young people, especially freelances, do not have their own seat or office. They prefer to move and take advantage of coffee shops, cafeterias, shopping centers and spaces that have been adapting themselves for this kind of workers. It is more and more accepted and natural to have work meetings in these establishments. It is the new world of fleeting offices.
- Spaces of **co-working** also have become established.

New forms of collaborative work are more and more common

In some profiles of independent young people there is a tendency

"WE ARE NOT ALL BORN TO BE ENTREPRENEURS". IT IS NECESSARY TO DEMYSTIFY UNDERTAKING AS A GUARANTEE FOR SUCCESS AND ECONOMIC STABILITY FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION.

The majority of cooperativists share the idea that there is a general apathy among young people of America on the subject of cooperativism. The urgent task is clearly identifying:

- **The big obstacles or problems** that inhibit their participation or explain this distant relationship, as the *lack of correct communication of the model or the secrecy of some cooperatives to consciously realize the generational replacement.*

- **The opportunities and strategies** that may be implemented to overcome these difficulties and strengthen the role of young people in the world of cooperativism.

Through the Case Studies we created a good diagnosis for both of these matters, for each kind of cooperative we studied: on one hand **cooperatives that promote the participation of young people**, on the other **cooperatives created by young people**.

4. 1. COOPERATIVES AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

Balance

To do the proposed "diagnosis" on the inclusion process of young people in cooperatives, some categories or fundamental themes on which are based the obstacles and opportunities to be evaluated were defined. They are:

A. THE TASK OF CONNECTING AND INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

B. YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LEADERSHIP

C. COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION OF THE MODEL

D. EDUCATION ON COOPERATIVES

E. PUBLIC POLITICS; THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

F. NETWORKS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE, COOPERATIVES AND INCLUSION BODIES

G. BENEFITS OR PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A. THE TASK OF CONNECTING AND INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

5. This list of perceptions, beliefs or myths was formed from the testimonies collected during the step of field work, both from young and adult cooperativists. In these sentences the opinions that different interviewed people expressed are synthesized.

Obstacles or difficulties

1. PERSISTING PREJUDICES

There is a combination of wrong perceptions, beliefs or myths that distort the opinion that cooperativists have of young people and inhibits their intentions of strengthening their participation and of including them in the leadership. At the same time young people operate some wrong collective imaginations that make them think that there is no place for them in cooperatives.⁵

Cooperativists on young people	Young people on cooperatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "They have no interest for collective work and for social purposes. They are individualist" • They are simplistic, do not commit. • They only find time to have fun, etc. • And other prejudices that were already mentioned: • They are inexperienced: "They have not collected sufficient knowledge nor experience to do their work properly yet". • They are not able to lead projects or take leading positions. • "They are disrespectful. They struggle to follow rules". • Little disciplined • Simplistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "They are for adult and more traditionalist people." • Cooperatives tend to be Agricultural or of Savings and Credit. The remaining types of cooperative are little known. • They are organizations of the past, a model that is losing validity before contemporary competitiveness. They do not adapt nor implement practices, activities that interest or are close to today's young people. • "They are not a profitable <i>business model</i> today." • "La mayoría de mis compañeros de universidad preferían trabajar en una entidad que fuera lucrativa, • "They are corrupt." Image affected by scandals. • Associated to the union dispute, to socialism. • Some young people of medium to high socioeconomic levels believe that cooperatives are for poorer communities; for marginal or vulnerable groups.

2. ONLY FUNCTIONAL INTEREST FOR COOPERATIVES

The grim reality: a big number of young people enter for a functional matter (a concrete benefit), without genuinely getting involved or showing interest for cooperativism.

- Aggravation: cooperatives have been influenced by **aggressive "commercial" models to persuade and enroll young people** with lures of benefits or immediate services (credits, discounts) too.
- The real interest for principles and values of cooperatives remains relegated. Inducement, communications processes and programs and events do not sufficiently connect with the majority of young associates, beneficiaries or users, for various reasons we analyzed throughout the Study.

3. LACK OF COMMITMENT AND DECISION IN THE MANAGING BODIES

This lack of commitment in some cases is due to a **lack of conviction and political will** inside cooperatives and is highlighted by omissions of this kind:

- **There are no serious and strategic plans to attract young people.** Many strategies can be planned, but they have to turn into real projects. In some cases it is only about obeying to the regulations or mandates the cooperative has established.

"I see very little real commitment in the practice. Let's say that the spaces and regulations exist, but accomplishment is never reached and this is obviously not good. If we really believe young people are important, we have to take more conclusive actions. Otherwise we will be stuck in the same situation in five years"

Cooperative Manager

- **The subject of youth does not receive sufficient resources (economic or of other kind).**
- **The creation of groups that lead politics and related activities is not promoted.**

In many cooperatives a committee or other juvenile groups still do not exist. Even in extreme cases, they do not know this leading figure and all the networks of young cooperativist that exist at an international level.

4. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

Some cooperatives establish requirements with specifications that a young person can hardly meet, complex and delayed bureaucratic procedures that limit and disincentivize the admission of new associates.

Example: The statute of Cooperactiva (Costa Rica), agricultural cooperative, only allows cane or coffee producers with their own plantation to become associates. This is a big obstacle to achieve generational connections, because very few young people meet these requirements.

5. CONCEPTION OF COOPERATIVES AS RIGID INSTITUTIONS

Some young people cannot adapt to the "dull and inflexible logic" of some cooperatives of a more traditional nature. Verticality, solemn manners and various protocols do not adapt to the ways today's young people relate with authority. They prefer:

- A more peer-to-peer behavior
- Flexible and divided by achievements forms of work in relation to new work styles.
- Options of emotional remuneration.
- Attractive withholding programs

6. NEW HOPES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE RURAL SECTOR

In the countryside, many young people do not wish to follow the agricultural vocation of their parents, which makes them distance from the cooperatives they built or to which they belong in this sector. This is mainly due to the **modernization processes** that take place in the villages or rural communities, they change their lifestyle, projects for the future, hopes for education and work. These processes take place due to phenomena like:

- Proximity to large cities, that puts them continuously in touch with economic, social and cultural dynamics of the urban areas.

- Economic and social dynamism of the region in which they are located.
- The expansion of connection ne-

tworks and strengthening of public policies for the use of ICT in these places.

The new hopes of young people in

the rural sector are related to the change of conceptions of:

Family	Education	Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They prefer to postpone forming a family and having children. Their own education is the priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the desire to take higher education to gain access to them they have to move to the cities or to places with a good educational offer. • Their own parents prefer that their children specialize in the field they like and study before starting their work life (There is less pressure to study "what needs to be studied" or work in family businesses). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not want to have very traditional jobs anymore. Some of the professions they study can only be practiced outside their communities. • It is not easy to find a different work market in the rural sector. • Once they obtain a professional title in the city it is very unlikely for them to go back.

Beyond the modernization processes, **violence or social conflicts**, especially of some rural areas of Latin America, make it so that young people forcibly move from their communities, achieve their life projects and do not want to go back.

Opportunities, challenges and strategies

1. CREATIVE CAMPAIGNS TO "DEMISTIFY" PREJUDICES

Disproving through a good communicative work the prejudices that today's young people have on cooperatives, will allow them to know their real good qualities and raise a potential interest to get involved in cooperativism. Then, disproving the prejudices cooperativists have on young people, is paramount to generate a relationship of trust, so to allow a fluent generational connection.

2. BUILDING A SERIOUS AND STRUCTURED YOUTH PROGRAM INSIDE COOPERATIVES

CASES:

- **COOPEVICTORIA (Costa Rica): Project Nuevas Generaciones (New Generations).**
- **CREDICOOP (Peru): Political commitment and economic support (10% of the excess to the youth program).**

Keeping previous cases as reference. **We named some important elements that contributed to build this program** to seriously face the youths matter:

- Assign a budget and sufficient resources to the project.
- Motivate and accompany the constitution process of the Young People Committee.
- Assign a place to the Committee inside the general

structure of the organization.

- Name a person to be in exclusive charge of the program and to manage projects and activities necessary to involve young people.
- Choose some young representatives of the Program and the Committee, to participate in the general assemblies of the cooperative and may intervene in tasks like the design of the strategic plan of the cooperative.
- Strategy of classification of youth in subgroups:** think of activities and projects in accordance with the life stage is key to connect with individual interests. The interests or expectations of a young person of 15 years of age are not alike to those of a young person of 35 years of age. Example In Coopervictoria strategies are divided by age. They have 3 groups: **Explorers** 6-11, **Guardians** 12-18, **Leaders** from 18 to 35.
- Tracking strategy:** they generate a record for each child and young person admitted into the company and they keep track, evaluating them to promote them from one group to another.

- **Prepare young people in the group of Leaders** to assume managing positions.

3. FLEXIBILIZATION OF REQUIREMENTS AND ADMISSION PROCESSES

It is necessary to re-evaluate the statutes that for rigidity, not up to date contents or inflexible politics prevent the participation of young people. In case they could not be modified, is it possible to think of some alternatives that may involve young people in other ways.

Specifically in the case of Coopervictoria (Costa Rica) they have explored options so that the fact of not owning a plantation of cane or coffee (which covers a lot of space and requires a lot of work), would not be hindrance to be admitted into the cooperative. One of the strategic ideas they thought of is the implementation of the avocado pear in the business line of the cooperative, because it can be much easier for some young people to grow some trees.

In other cooperatives efforts are being made to change some statutes so that cooperatives may accept joint ownership, to link the child without being the owner, so that the generational replacement may be managed

in a more progressive way.

4. NEW BUSINESS UNITS

Lines of services or even new brands to involve new professions in which young people may be leaders.

CASES:

- **Industrias Integradas (Colombia):** In addition to the dressmaking for third parties, they developed their own brand of clothes.
- **Cooperativa De Los Andes (Colombia):** Network of coffee shops and lines of accessories.
- **Coopsco (Canadá):** Accommodation, transportation, design and printing services, etc.

B. YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LEADERSHIP

Obstacles or difficulties

1. LOW PRESENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LEADERSHIP

"In Coopervictoria there are no young people in the leadership. They do not participate to the administration of the cooperative, because they always select the same profiles for the leadership. Managers claim it is not a lack of good will from their part, but a lack of initiative and empowerment of young people. They recognize some young people have a good profile, but there are many requirements they do not meet, for example the three-year term as an associate one. There also is the concern of older people about putting unexperienced people in the leadership."

Young cooperativist

The main reasons that explain the low participation of young people in the leadership bodies of cooperatives are:

- **Prejudices on young people.** In the majority of cooperatives adult associates do not trust the abilities young people might have on leadership, based on the prejudices on their lack of experience, knowledge and informal attitude. *"They do not have initiative nor commitment", "they have no experience or attitude to lead", "they know nothing about finance", "they are impulsive when making decisions".*
- **The discredit of electoral**

processes. In cooperatives the functioning of which is centralized on a closed and conservative managing body, electoral processes tend to take a long time, the same people are re-elected or they impose requirements that young people of the cooperative can hardly meet. *"The same people remain, the ones that manage their interests", "Elections have been blocked for years".*

- **Older managers' resistance to change.** Young cooperativists consider resistance to change inside these organizations one of the major obstacles to generational connection. They usually say that "adults are conservative, they resist to opening, dialog, inclusion, and they do not trust new generations' abilities."
- **Low initiative of young people.** For their part some cooperativists say the problem resides in the lack of initiative and commitment of young people. They state that those who "show" their leadership, project management skills and real interest for the future of the cooperative, do not face any obstacles to participate in the leadership.

Even though, in some cases this position is part of the prejudices they have on them, some young people recognize that within their

generation not all have the required commitment, Among other reasons because many enter for a functional matter, without being involved or directly interested in the cooperativist model.

Before the dilemma of which of the two problems may have a bigger influence on this low participation, **the resistance to change of cooperativist or the lack of initiative of young people,** it was resolved -starting from the analysis of the Case studies-, that both have a similar influence. Cooperatives have to take on the challenge of opening: learning to recognize the multiple skills of young people and identify and accept those that prove to be excellent leaders. Meanwhile young people have to take on the challenge of "initiative": thus empowering so to claim spaces inside the organization and to manage their own programs.

2. LOW PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE GOVERNING BODIES

In the cooperatives an active participation of women can be highlighted, but men still predominate in the leadership. The fact that the admission to these organizations is open, entails that both genders may assume positions of leadership

in a spontaneous way, but as it happens in the political life in general, the relationships of power inside cooperatives are permeated by the logic of gender inequality, to which both men and women contribute.

As Melina Cerviño mentions in an interview on the website **Valor + Inteligencia Asociativa** (Value + Associative Intelligence), of Argentina:

"Leading positions have historically been covered by men and this is a very marked phenomenon in the field of cooperatives of public services. It is necessary to revert this reality, because there are many women working inside this movement and, sometimes, due to lack of awareness or training, they do not do not bring

themselves to cover leading positions. We also noted in the measurements that men are the ones to not grant admission to leading positions to women.

Cultural barrier is very strong and even more on the inside. In the small villages it is a patriarchal tradition written in stone."⁶

6. <https://comerciojusticia.info/valormas/2018/11/28/la-importancia-de-activar-participacion-y-politicas-de-genero-en-el-cooperativismo/>

IT IS IMPORTANT TO CRITICALLY REFLECT ON THE SUBJECT, INCLUDE IT IN THE EDUCATION GIVEN TO ALL ASSOCIATES, TO START BEING AWARE OF A VERY SUBTLE PROBLEM OR THAT IS NOT SO EVIDENT COMPARED TO OTHER PROBLEMS.

Opportunities, challenges and strategies

1. WELL STRUCTURED TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR LEADERS

- Detect and motivate potential leaders.
- **Train them in leadership.** Inside this training they have to work on other subjects, among which: cooperativist model, undertaking in the solidary sector, finances,

administrative management of a cooperative so that they are prepared to cover leading positions or to later on replicate the model starting from their own initiatives.

- Effectively include them in the leadership, separating "seats" or positions destined to young people.

- Include the gender equity focus in the training.
- Clear mechanisms and regulations to limit the number of former leaders.

CASE

Cooperativa CSN (Mexico) Since 2015 they implemented the **Leadership Career** to recruit young successful associates in the board of directors. One of the leaders of the cooperative is a young person.

In the program some young people are selected for each branch office of the cooperative, who have a good record in the cooperative as thrifty associates and some seniority. Afterwards they are trained on the history of the cooperative movement, history and governance of CSN and an evaluation is made. The person with the highest score is taken into consideration for a place in the leadership.

"I was already very committed with Cooperativa CSN, but being part of the governance bodies of this institution has really made so that I am even more bound, that I get enthusiastic for anything we do, that I am motivated to make my best effort to keep the institution advancing".

Young cooperativist

With this case we highlighted that the participation of young people in the boards of directors really strengthens the bond with and commitment to the cooperative.

C. COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION OF THE MODEL

Obstacles or difficulties

1. LOW SPREADING

Cooperatives and inclusion bodies make very faint and intuitive efforts on the subject of Communications. The model spreading is not very effective in general and even less the one of juvenile cooperatives. Many young people do not know that cooperativism also is a business model or a form of solidary economy.

by the educational systems still is an obstacle.

Difficulty: High schools have other priorities to train that answer to concerns and competencies for today's world.

3. SCARCE USE OF DIGITAL MEANS AND STRATEGIES

- In some more traditional cooperatives, this situation is related to the subject of "Resistance to change". They still do not believe in the importance of including technology in the processes of the cooperative and young people are those who try, sometimes in vain, to have more adult cooperativists change their mind.

4. OUTDATED AND LITTLE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

It is necessary to modify the strategies, today that the attention of the young public is so selective.

2. LIMITED REACH OF EDUCATION IN COOPERATIVISM

Although some processes are more consolidated, in the majority of countries the adoption of a solid training for cooperativism

- It is very common to propose

Opportunities, challenges and strategies

1. INTENSIVE COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

the objectives of which are:

- **Modify negative perceptions, myths and prejudices** that mutually exist between cooperativists and young people.
- **Widely communicate what the cooperativist model is about**, the kind of existing cooperatives and their benefits (**Example:** work opportunities through undertaking).

Besides the utilization of digital means it is important to reach spaces where young people gather:

- **Presence in universities:** activations, alliances with

universities, finding the way to implement a podium on cooperativism in different areas of knowledge for example in administrative degrees, human and social sciences, etc.

- **Contact with specific niches**, gathering groups of young people consolidated in their respective cities, with interest or activities related to the cooperative.

• **Build a cooperativist culture since an early age:**

- Presence in high schools: teaching
- Work with children

2. USE OF ICTS:

• **SPECIALIZED MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS**

starting from a deep understanding of the ways of communication and interaction between young people in these platforms: ways of posting and generating interactions on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and understanding new networks and ways of communicating with young people.

• **STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED BY INBOUND MARKETING**

The strategy of Inbound Marketing consists in attracting specific audiences, through the publication of contents on the Internet that may be interesting to them (either be-

cause they meet their lifestyle, needs or expectations) and at the same time be related to the subjects that the organization or institution wants to transmit.

It is a non-invasive way of communication, that instead of "pursuing" people with an explicit message, seduces them with attractive matters to have them approach on their own initiative.

This strategy can be very useful to have potential associates get to know the cooperativist model and attract them, in an organic way. Example: publication of articles, videos, podcast that talk about the subject of *New Forms of work*, in which they communicate how cooperativism relates to such tendencies and converts into an ideal work alternative for today's young people.

The strategy is completed when links or spaces where people can give their data to receive more information are included, and a contact with people that can later be explicitly invited to participate in these organizations is achieved.

3. CORRECT COMMUNICATION OF BENEFITS YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN

Although the idea is to have young people enter the world of cooperativism for its solidary basis and not for punctual economic benefits they may obtain, we think it is not necessary to demonize the fact that young people initially enter because they think some programs are a good opportunity to settle

their need and accomplish their projects.

In a positive way cooperatives become an important ally so that young people can develop their potential and have a good quality of life.

In effect it is strategic enough to communicate that:

- **"Cooperativism is a business option for young people that want to undertake, which is a good work option"**, taking into consideration the growing tendency to work independently and develop one's own ideas of business.
- Cooperativism bets on the professional and comprehensive training of its associates, because it believes in the value of education for social transformation.

4. AUDIOVISUAL APPROACH TO LANGUAGE

It is important to increase the use of communications through audiovisual language -much more common and valued by today's young people- with the publication of contents like: conferences on cooperativism, international meetings, interviews to experts, institutional messages, important events or activities realized by young people; and other more creative proposals like sketches, mini web shows, monologues or Ted Talks in which young cooperativists share their experience.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE

CONCEPT OF AN ENLARGED COOPERATIVE

Extend their services and activities to the community which the cooperative coexists with.

CASE:

Industrias Integradas (Colombia): Permanent communication and interaction with the rural community to which its associates belong, through activities that involve families. This strategy positions the cooperative, makes it known, has it become a reference, generates a link that later on could seduce young people that will somehow feel "part of it" already.

6. COMMUNICATION TEAM OF THE COOPERATIVIST MODEL

It would be strategic to take advantage of the knowledge and experience of young cooperativists that have degrees related to communications and convene them so that they can design:

- A chair on the spreading of the cooperativist model that will diffuse among all members of the cooperative.
- Punctual strategies so that the subject of cooperativism can spread.

7. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE THAT COULD CENTRALIZE COMMUNICATIONS OF THE COOPERATIVIST SECTOR

The centralization of communications of the cooperativist sector could be through a web page,

• USE OF APPLICATIONS AND OTHER DIGITAL MEANS TO FACILITATE TRANSACTIONS

CASE

Marroneo (Puerto Rico)

- Through an application called Attach móvil, they can make money transfers.
- "The new cooperativist wave". A web page from where young people can download all the documentation they need was created.
- Something attractive for young people NETWORK BETWEEN COOPERATIVES. Internet transactions, applications, networks of shared branch offices: Circuito Cooperativo (Cooperative Circuit), is a network to make transfers between cooperatives.

that an international committee manages, in which all information means (web pages, blogs, fan pages...) specifically of youth of the continent would come together.

- This guarantees a more fluent communication between different cooperatives of young people in America, which strengthens the supporting networks.
- And contributes to the promotion of its initiatives, on a much wider scale.

D. EDUCATION ON COOPERATIVES

The support and regulations existing in each country on the subject are unequal, but it can be discerned that the education on solidary economy **is far from the agendas of American governments**. The case of Canada is still an exception. The panorama is critical in this sense:

Obstacles or difficulties

1. THERE IS NO EDUCATION ON COOPERATIVES

Although there are some more consolidated processes like the case of Argentina (since 2006 with Article 90 of the Federal Law of Education, that establishes that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), in the majority of countries the consolidation of a solid training for cooperativism by educational systems is still an obstacle.

Alberto Mora (2012) mentions in his study *Cooperativism in Latin America. A variety of contributions to the sustainable development*:

"Regardless of the achievements of the cooperative sector, not in all countries it is recognized by

the population in general, and this is due to the little promotion the same sector realizes of its qualities and benefits, mainly because of the **low accomplishment of the fifth cooperative principle, that refers to education, training and information**. Thus, the same sector is not interested in an integrated promotion proposal, all its achievements will only remain as memories to cooperativists, not to other people that could potentially form part of new cooperatives in all countries."

2. INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF TEACHERS THAT CAN BE IN CHARGE

Some institutions that try to obey laws on the teaching of cooperativism in schools expect the professors to do the extra effort to teach the subject or take charge of the school cooperative, which is counterproductive because for the sake of answering to an excessive work load, they teacher sacrifices the quality or depth of its work. The most opportune thing is to assign the subject to someone that will exclusively take it on.

3. OTHER THEMES OF EDUCATION ARE IN THE AGENDA OF THE INSTITUTIONS

- In the majority of agenda of governments cooperativism has become a marginal matter.
- High schools and universities themselves have other new interests that today's world requires in the training of students: like languages, undertaking, ICTs, sustainability, etc. Perhaps a few decades ago, there was some room to manage the inclusion of a chair on cooperativism or a training program on solidary economy, in educational institutions. Today though we have to compete with a range of skills or abilities demanded by society or the work world.
- Other types of institutions like the governmental ones have concentrated their youth politics on subjects like prevention or the fight against criminality and gangs of young people, on promoting sports, culture, edu-

cation, undertaking, orange economy, etc., but there are no proposals to promote cooperativism among young people.

4. TRADITIONAL TRAINING, NOT INNOVATIVE.

Training on cooperativism usually is traditional and far from the interactive ways demanded by young people, with some exceptions.

5. THEY DO NOT LOOK FOR AUDIENCE IN NEW SPACES

The inducements and mandatory training spaces for new associates, for example, are usually squandered spaces

Opportunities, challenges and strategies

1. SOME COOPERATIVES HAVE THEIR OWN HIGH SCHOOLS or agreements to train in high schools.

historical data, but it also implies a cooperative praxis, a way of thinking and acting with others and this requires a cooperative pedagogy, which is being constructed"

training for associates.

2. CONSTRUCTION OF A COOPERATIVE PEDAGOGY

"Regarding education, there are many positions within the cooperative movement. One, of which we are part, that states that cooperative education is not only about a list of values and principles with

Case study Report Cambá (Argentina)

What else could be done

- Change the structure and style of the inducements or mandatory

- Cooperatives may have or contract teams of young people to develop these training processes.

- To not lose ground with other training priorities in high schools and universities Evolve the concept in training for cooperativism and talk about training for undertaking, co-working or other themes.

E. PUBLIC POLITICS: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Obstacles or difficulties

1. In the majority of countries clear or conclusive actions or mechanisms are NOT applied to promote cooperativism among young people.

ters is not being demanded or is poorly done.

3. Little promotion of politics and programs that support juvenile cooperativism.

of young people; promoting sports, culture, education, undertaking, orange economy, etc., but proposals to promote cooperativism among young people are relegated.

2. Laws in favor of cooperativism are not applied. In some countries mandatory teaching of cooperativism in educational cen-

4. It is not a priority in the agendas. The agenda of governments has been filled with other priorities: prevention or the fight against criminality and gangs

F. NETWORKS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE, COOPERATIVES AND INCLUSION BODIES

Obstacles or difficulties

LACK OF INTEGRATED WORK

In some occasions the networks between cooperatives at a national or international level maintain a limited

communication and do not make the necessary efforts to develop projects as a group. "They all aim at the same objectives in an individualistic way". Identify common problems,

share learning of both unsuccessful and successful experiences, unify economic and human resources, give fluency to projects.

Opportunities, challenges and strategies

1. **CONSOLIDATION OF NETWORKS, ASSOCIATIONS OR ALLIANCES BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE** that make permanent meeting possible, are one of the ideal scenarios for fundamentals that facilitate work and development of projects.

• **Create events and spaces that promote permanent meeting** between young people, stimulates and makes possible the consolidation of networks or associations that are fundamental for the constitution of

a cooperative. Example The precursor of Marroneo (Puerto Rico) was a workshop of students, where they would periodically meet to study and develop other projects.

• **Support the continuous participation to events and meetings of young cooperativists**

The meeting and interaction with young people of other cooperatives stimulates the creation of new groups and committees. We met many Young People

Committees that were created in some international events in which they had the opportunity to know the experiences of other young cooperativists

• **Homogenize strategies in Latin America** and seek for a dialog and collaborative work between them. In many countries programs or politics that in other had not been thought and that can be replicated are being implemented.

G. BENEFITS OR PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Obstacles or difficulties

1. **BENEFITS NOT CONNECTED TO INTERESTS AND WAYS OF BEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

2. **LOW INVESTMENT IN THIS "TITLE"**

Opportunities, challenges and strategies

One of the major themes the project of research wanted to develop was the one of **benefits that young people could be offered to link them to cooperatives**, especially in three fields:

Education and training

Without a doubt *Education* and *Employment* are still two pressing needs among young people, in particular those of countries of Latin America where social disparity problems are evident, and all benefits that can be thought of to make up for them, will be vary valued by and attractive for young people. This is why we emphasized the opportunities that can

Employment and undertaking

be found regarding these matters. Nevertheless we considered that from a holistic point of view, other themes like *Entertainment* and *Culture* are important enough to closely connect with young people.

Forms of innovation in the organizations, have remained recorded in the

Forms of innovation in the organizations

different items or categories of the diagnosis (The task of linking and involving young people, Communications and promotion of the model, Young People in the leadership, etc.).

Professional education for their life

1. **SCHOLARSHIP AND INCENTIVES PROGRAM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

A program to stimulate the professional training of young associates, also benefits cooperatives. It represent a great funding opportunity for young people they would hardly find in other scenarios, and in this way they would guarantee this fundamental right and increase their chances of having a better quality of life in the future.

It also implies an interesting

benefit for cooperatives since young people who gain access to this training later on could put in their knowledge and expertise into the cooperative, either as: employees, program leaders, allies, suppliers or ambassadors of the cooperative, who inspire and motivate other young people.

CASE:
Industrias Integradas (Colombia): Subsidizes 50% of some technical or professional degrees for young people of the countryside. They give scholarships and

a monthly provision to support their studies.

2. **PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES**

- Professional
- School exchanges
- International voluntary work

3. **HOLISTIC TRAINING**

To go beyond professional training, cooperatives may offer courses, workshops, talks to promote the learning in various areas (art, culture, wellbeing,

CASES

- **Industrias Integradas (Colombia)** The committee of which was created in 2017, after a young person of the cooperative happened to attend an event in which he knew for the first time the experience of leaders of other cooperatives who were grouped in committees.
- **The Juvenile Action Committee of the cooperative CSN**, was created after a visit they received in the cooperative of some young people of Panama, with whom they had to organize and event and who became inspirational reference.

technology, etc.), that allow the development of talents and hobbies. These activities may be addressed both to young associates or to community in general. It is a way to reach a wider public.

“COOPERATIVES ARE A BUSINESS OPTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE SEEKING TO START A BUSINESS, WHICH IS A GOOD JOB OPTION.”

INTERVIEWED FOR THE CASE STUDIES

CASE

Cambá (Argentina)
Open workshop on Creative Technologies. Especially addressed to teachers, educators and curious people who work in the field of knowledge transfer. In the workshop teamwork activities are proposed that make reflect on themes the cooperative has experience and knowledge of (In this case for example the theme of the potential of technological tools in the classroom).

Employment, undertaking and economic stability

This kind of benefits has to contribute to the **Economic Stability** of young people that have started their **work life**. Strategies like:

The cooperative could be a bridge between university life and work, through professional practices in different areas.

tion of "job interviews" or a space where users (employers and job-seekers), can public their offers and work profiles.

1. INCLUSION OF NEW WORK TASKS

Link and delegate among young people, areas of the market and new service lines in accordance with new competences. Example: in the field of ICTs.

3. CREATION OF USE OF JOB LISTING

Digital platforms operating as job listings, facilitate the work research process among young people. It would be innovative and very useful to:

- Make alliances with universities to **offer vacancies of internship of different areas**. Alliance with faculties of communication, social sciences, administrative sciences to link young people not necessarily involved in the world of cooperativism.

2. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES IN COOPERATIVES

One of the obstacles to the integration in the work market of recently graduated young people is the requirement of professional experience. Few companies contract "rookies".

- Create a platform of this kind, specifically between cooperatives, that classifies work offers by type of cooperative of productive sector.

- Open in the page of cooperatives or inclusion bodies a sec-

4. EMPLOYMENT FAIRS

Institutionalize a periodic event inside the cooperative, in which other cooperatives that have work vacancies are invited.

5. PROMOTION OF UNDERTAKING

This theme will be dealt with later on, when we talk about the Opportunities of Cooperatives of Young People, but we will make a note that an interesting strategy are:

- **Business units created by young people along with cooperatives.**

The idea is to identify young people who want develop a business idea that may be of interest for the cooperative, because it coincides with its objectives. The cooperative would work as the associate, would work on the construction of the model and would have

the resources for its execution, while young people would focus on working. In this way the strategy is a "win-win".

6. TERMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACCESS CREDITS IN THE SOLIDARY SECTOR

- **Generate alliances with Cooperatives of Savings and Credit to have them increase the flexibility of their credit solicitation processes on matters of:**

Requirements:

Other types of documents may be taken into consideration, like:

- Accounts to get paid, requests, contracts, prizes, promissory notes, or production, for example, to cover advances or finance already contracted projects.
- Clients (current and potential) and commercial references.

Payment method:

That can adapt to the seasonal nature typical of different businesses recently constituted. Example:

- Grace period, especially for the start.
- "Pretexts": 2 or 3 months in which they do not have to pay the fee and extending the period to pay the debt back.
- Low monthly fees and a couple of high ones a year.
- Possibility of installments

7. SAVING PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Saving programs that adapt to the needs of young people promoted through attractive campaigns to have them known are attractive to young people and also contribute to their economic stability.

OFFERING DIFFERENT TRAINING FORMATS IS ONE WAY TO REACH A WIDER AUDIENCE.

Entertainment and culture

Below some representative themes that interest today's young people and indicate the type of activities of themes that can be included in an **Entertainment and Culture Program** inside a cooperative are enumerated. These themes are related to tendencies and contemporary phenomena that influence the tastes and habits of new generations and that may serve to design attractive activities, programs or benefits inside cooperatives.

SPECIAL INTERESTS OF TODAY'S YOUNG PEOPLE

<p>ART, CREATIVE AND AUDIOVISUAL WORLD</p>	<p>Examples of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses, workshops or talks on photography, history of cinema, script writing, creative writing, illustration, digital animation and others. • Creation of movie clubs
<p>ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today's young people" are characterized for having embraced the concern for the care of the environment and the respect for nature, and have adopted much more "friendly" lifestyles.. Hence the greater use of bicycles or electric vehicles, for example. • In a particular way in some developing countries, there is a growing tendency to value outdoors activities. It happens in countries where the sensation of insecurity is not strong yet or where urban planning has started to prioritize the theme of "public space". <p>Examples of activities: Bicycle or walking tours of the city and ecological, Groups of Scouts, pedestrians, cultural picnics, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close relationship with mascots: <p>Examples of activities: Family entertainment activities with mascots, Training on care, Veterinary surgeon services.</p>
<p>LOVE FOR TRAVELING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traveling has almost become an obsession for young people of this generation. In general it is included in their future projects: live, study or know foreign countries. • Globalization, Internet and digital means mass use, importance of social networks, talks on opening to a multicultural world, have influenced on this form of perceiving traveling with no doubt. <p>Examples of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXCHANGES IN OTHER COUNTRIES. Advice on outside exchanges and voluntary work: documentation, exchange scholarship in universities or other institutions, lodging advice and logistics, among other things. • INLAND TRAVELING. "KNOW THE COUNTRY I BELONG TO"

HEALTHY HABITS AND COMPREHENSIVE WELLBEING

GREATER BODY CONSCIOUSNESS: This tendency goes under various meanings:

- **BODY-MIND RELATIONSHIP. Examples of activities:** Yoga
- **HEALTHY DIET. Examples of activities:** Fairs of country or organic food.
- **WAVE FIT and GROWING INTEREST FOR PRACTICING SPORTS. Examples of activities:** Urban and mountain biking, climbing and other forms of high resistance physical conditioning.

Final annotation on the subject of BENEFITS that may be offered to young people to link them to cooperatives.

Starting from the premise that the best way to know how to approach young people and attract them, is to ask them with what kind of benefits or projects they identify, that is to say knowing them a little, it seems pertinent to suggest that inside cooperatives the mechanisms were

evaluated to realize a:

CASE STUDY TO KNOW THEIR YOUNG PEOPLE BETTER

When we zoom in on young people who specifically visit, belong to or are close to a determined cooperative, it is possible to notice the specific characteristics and expectations of this public, we recognize the public we face with more clarity.

It is clear that interests or priorities of young people can vary from one cooperative to another. Realize a study on a small scale -qualitative or quantitative-, will allow it to be more assertive and precise at the time of designing strategies and actions to attract young people from their own realities and needs.

Zumbacoop Event, COEPROUASD (Dominican Republic)



4. 2. COOPERATIVES CREATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE:

Balance

The types of cooperatives young people tend to create are the *university/scholar* ones and those of *associated work*. Starting from the experience of *Marroneo* (Cooperative of the students of architecture of the University of Puerto Rico) and *Cambá* (Cooperative of associated work of Argentina, working in the field of technological services) we made the diagnosis to understand how the constitution and consolidation processes of cooperatives of young people are. with the same logic of the previous section, we defined some characteristics or themes in which we gathered the most important difficulties and opportunities. They are:

A. DEVELOPMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF COOPERATIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

B. PARTICIPATION OF OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE

A. DEVELOPMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF COOPERATIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Obstacles or difficulties

Some of the difficulties to constructing and giving continuity to a cooperative of young people are:

1. LACK OF AWARENESS OF OPERATIVE.

Their members are required to execute accounting, financial, juridical and administrative jobs in an intuitive way, because they are not trained in such areas.

"They never gave me a class of business administration, nor on how to administrate a cooperative and this is my role now. So I had to learn on the way, accounting, human resources, work laws, how

to make operational decisions to be able to help my cooperative. In the cooperativism class they talk about the model, but not of how they work operatively speaking."

Young associate of a university cooperative

2. LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Cooperatives of young people are regulated by national laws that impose requirements that complicate their creation. Example The special Law of juvenile cooperatives of Puerto Rico establishes that only people that belong to the institution and are 29 or less years of age can be

associates, which excludes many young people who could be part of it.

The processes for the constitution of a cooperative are **bu-reaucratic and not up to date**. There are too many requirements and some of them do not have a "clear meaning". Example: In Costa Rica the minimum number of members for cooperatives of associated work is 12, and for traditional cooperatives it is 20, while in other countries it is sufficient to start with 5 associates. in case any of the members should leave, the cooperative would be dissolved.

Barriers or difficulties in university or scholar cooperatives:

• LACK OF TIME

University life is very intense, both for the academic burden and for recreation and socialization activities). This prevents young people from looking after the cooperative full-time.

• INCONSTANCY OR LACK OF COMMITMEN

The "lack of time" precisely in university life makes it so young people are more **inconstant** or unfocused, which is why it

is much more complicated to achieve involving people who are ready to commit and remain in the cooperatives for a long time. Very few are interested in entering the leading bodies because this requires them extra work like the production of reports, presence at periodic meetings and other tasks they are not willing to do.

"The boards of our cooperative shine for their absence. We only meet for what is essential".

Young associate of a university cooperative

Barriers or difficulties in cooperatives of associated work:

• WORKING AS AN INDEPENDENT IS MUCH MORE COMPLICATED

The task of managing one's own job, guaranteeing the necessary continuity and flow of projects so that all members of the cooperative have a wok stability.

Opportunities, challenges and strategies

Cooperativism represents a very good alternative to undertaking with a real collective purpose, and in this way a work option that the majority of young people have not considered with clarity, in part because cooperatives have not promoted themselves this way, with which we believe they have great opportunities.

Until now, other entities have been in charge of the promotion, orientation and financing of undertaking and micro-entrepreneurship, nevertheless, the focus has very controversial elements like:

- Individual efforts and achievements are usually favored.
- In many cases, the reach of these programs represents an economy of small businesses of survival with little chances of growth and contribution to social development.

- In case of some technological undertaking, like startups, the final purpose, is attract the big risk investment funds to capitalize (and enrich their founders).

The cooperative movement can be proclaimed as the collective undertaking option, that also is based on real supporting networks and effective supply chains.

This neglect is common in private undertakings (only the law of the jungle rules in the market) but cooperativism has the tools to propose solid forms of undertaking, well supported and with a more social and praiseworthy purpose.

Specifically one of the more conclusive forms in which inclusion bodies of cooperatives -like ICA- can support the constitution and consolidation of cooperatives of young people executing a com-

prehensive program that promotes social and collective undertaking, that goes beyond the courses that teach *"the step by step* for the development of business ideas" and do not encompass other types of components and learnings.

1. COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL AND COLLECTIVE UNDERTAKING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

We need guidance in all steps of the cooperative, starting from the first meeting of the group, until the day of the inauguration, and even one or three years later when economic stability of the cooperative is expected"

Young cooperativist

The comprehensive program should include the following **components**:

- Financial support
- Training
- Formal contact and work networks
- Resources and spaces
- Promotion

I. Financial support

Young people who decide to undertake usually have many difficulties at the time of asking for loans to traditional financial entities, especially in the initial stage of their projects, because they still cannot count on a good credit history or the "ability to have debts". In many cases they resort to their family, friends or more flexible entities to reach the starting capital.

Moreover they have to sustain maintenance costs, bad times or financial crises and other problems when they want to grow.

Offering these options, besides of credits (theme we will develop later on), would generate a solid base for young people to consolidate their projects.

Opportunities:

- Grants for the entrepreneur
- Endowment and support subsidy
- Patronage or alliances
- Table of projects (Fund with re-

sources destined to finance viable projects selected through a call).

II. Training, advice and accompaniment

It is not about training on the specific competences of the job, but on areas that can realistically teach to undertake and consolidate businesses or projects.

Opportunities:

- **Marketing** focused on the evaluation and formulation of "really" viable business models, evaluating elements like the existence of a market with a desire of consumption, the ease to reach this market through distribution chains and clear chances of commercial success.
- **Consumer's behavior**
- **Project managing**
- **Formulation of projects and execution of logistic works.**
- **Training on Administrative Sciences.**
- **Training on the use of digital tools.**
- **Community Management**
- **Discussions with young cooperativists** that are part of successful cooperatives and have them talk about their experience and advice on new initiatives.
- **Specialized training on productive sectors.**

It is important that young people keep in touch and learn from

close or similar experiences to those of their own cooperatives. Studying the theme of consolidation of cooperative of young people for specific productive sectors is strategic.

III Formal work networks

Opportunities:

- **Create spaces and networks for the supply and demand of services of independent workers.**

Make unionizations possible, stimulate associativity and facilitate the formalization of contact means.

Through **events: fairs, circles with entrepreneurs, networking events, and platforms on digital means** that connect or gather offerors and demanders (companies and independents) for freelance jobs or provision of services.

They can be organized by sector, profession, clusters or supply chains: **specialize networks.**

These networks make contact much more direct and perhaps more agile compared to the intermediation of a traditional job listing.

Example: We are content, digital platform for freelance editors: they write of matters that interest them at the request of some companies.

- **Collaborative work and abilities for associativity.**

It is not only about facilitating spaces for shared work but also

EXAMPLES OF PROFESSIONAL FIELDS OR WORKS WHERE THERE ARE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- New information and communication technologies; design and development of startups for multiple solutions (services, civic, commercial) web development, mobile applications, etc.
- Artistic and cultural collectives. Production and staging of events
- Advices, research and design of projects that imply gathering of professionals of different areas.
- Training services, workshops, ludic, educational and participative methodologies. examples: cooperatives of design and graphic printing, cooperatives of industrial and textile design, cooperatives of photographers.
- Professions and projects of services and commerce related to new lifestyles and sustainable development.
- **CASE: Cambá (Argentina)** --> That gathers developers, technicians and artists who offer technological solutions for events, artistic productions and interactive facilities.

creating programs and strategies to promote, teach, advice and accompany independents so that they can learn and achieve working in groups, forming cooperatives, realizing alliances and forming networks of effective work.

It is about successfully uniting their expertise, reputation, abilities, capital, diverse assets, human resources to strengthen their productivity, competitiveness and commercial management.

IV. Resources and spaces

Opportunities:

- **Access to working spaces for young entrepreneurs.**
- Attending to new forms of work:

- Opens halls with WIFI and coffee.
- Work rooms or small offices.
- Thinking about the possibility to open some kind of Co-working.

- **Supporting advice for entrepreneurs**
- Professionals in administration sciences, marketing, communications, legal services and more, with disposition to advice young entrepreneurs.

V. Promotion and circulation of their work

Opportunities:

- **Periodic promotion events**
- Spaces where independent workers can show and offer their products and services in spaces of Comfama and external.
- Brands or initiatives may be static or change every 2 months.
- **Market of services**
- Not between offerors and demanders (companies and independents) anymore, but a commercial fair with businesses and projects of independent members to offer their services and products.

2. MANAGING FACILITIES FOR FORMALIZATION

Normative, tax facilities, etc.

3. COLLABORATIVE WORK NETWORKS: Promoting the creation of Circuits of work or services between cooperatives.

4. SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM BETWEEN COOPERATIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The idea of "sponsorship" is to have cooperatives with more career and experience advice and closely accompany those that are being constituted. The fact they belong to the same sector, enriches the learning and increases the chances of success in these "sponsored" cooperatives.

Once the process is over they can be allied for the cooperative work: get along as suppliers,

mutually facilitate resources, spaces, etc.

CASE:
Cambá(Argentina): Sponsorship activities of other cooperatives.

A much more ambitious project could unite various cooperativist institutions and of other natures and create a **workshop of incubation of cooperatives of young people.**

5. INCLUSION OF YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

In some circumstances it is better to create mechanisms to co-opt young people who are interested in building cooperatives in markets that are already filled, atomized or that belong to little profitable or viable sectors; and include them in cooperatives already constituted that execute the same activity.

Punctual opportunities for university or scholar cooperatives:

• CONNECTION BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND ASSOCIATED WORK COOPERATIVES

The scholar and university co-operativist cycle cannot end in this scenario. A transition to other stages in the cooperative sector has to be promoted and this transition can happen through joint and permanent work with cooperatives of associated work.

B. PARTICIPATION OF OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE

Obstacles or difficulties

1. LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE MODEL AND COOPERATIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

There is a wide lack of awareness of these options of cooperativism. Difficulties and limitations that exist in each country for their constitution are also evident. Nevertheless, there is a great opportunity to attract many young people to create projects of collective work through cooperativism.

2. BELIEFS THAT INHIBIT PARTICIPATION

In university or scholar cooperatives:

- Avoid the process of association. Some think it is tedious.
- Believe their participation will mean investing a lot of time.

- Not wanting to sacrifice free time, or time they can use for other interests.

In cooperatives of associated work

- Cooperatives do not have a profitable business model.

5

BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the following diagrams the diagnoses of the previous chapter are synthesized, both on the theme of *cooperatives and young people*, and the one of *cooperatives created by young people*.

COOPERATIVES AND YOUNG PEOPLE		
Category	Obstacles or difficulties	Opportunities, challenges and strategies
THE TASK OF CONNECTING AND INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Persisting prejudices 2. Only functional interest for cooperatives 3. Lack of commitment and decision in the managing bodies 4. Mandatory requirements for admission 5. Conception of cooperatives as rigid institutions 6. New hopes of young people in the rural sector. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creative campaigns to "demystify" prejudices. 2. Building a serious and structured youth program inside cooperatives. 3. Flexibilization of requirements and admission processes. 4. New business units

Category	Obstacles or difficulties	Opportunities, challenges and strategies
YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LEADERSHIP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low presence of young people in the leadership 2. Low participation of women in the governing bodies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Well-structured training programs for leaders.
COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION OF THE MODEL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low spreading 2. Limited reach of education in cooperativism 3. Scarce use of digital means and strategies 4. Outdated and little effective communication with young people 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intensive communication campaign 2. Use of ICTs 3. Correct communication of benefits young people are interested in 4. Audiovisual approach to language 5. Implementation of the concept of an enlarged cooperative. 6. Communication team of the cooperativist model. 7. International committee that could centralize communications of the cooperativist sector.
EDUCATION FOR COOPERATIVISM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no education for cooperativism 2. Insufficient number of teachers that can be in charge 3. Other themes of education are in the agenda of the institutions 4. Traditional training, not innovative 5. They do not look for audience in new spaces 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cooperativist high schools or meetings with educational institutions 2. Construction of a cooperative pedagogy 3. Changing the scheme of inducements for associates 4. Teams of young people to develop the training process 5. Using interesting themes of training: undertaking and co-working

Category	Obstacles or difficulties	Opportunities, challenges and strategies
PUBLIC POLITICS: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No actions or mechanisms applied for the promotion of the model 2. Laws in favor of cooperativism are not applied. As we noted with the previous theme, 3. Little promotion of politics that support juvenile cooperativism 4. The theme has no place in public or private agendas 	
NETWORKS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE, COOPERATIVES AND INCLUSION BODIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of integrated work 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidation of networks, associations or alliances between young people 2. Creating events and spaces that promote permanent meeting 3. Support the continuous participation to events and meetings of young cooperativists 4. Homogenize strategies in Latin America.
BENEFITS OR PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Benefits not connected to interests and ways of being of young people 2. Low investment in this "title" 	<p>Professional education for their life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scholarship and incentives program for higher education 2. Promotion of international exchanges 3. Holistic training <p>Employment, undertaking and economic stability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusion of new work tasks 2. Professional practices in cooperatives

Category	Obstacles or difficulties	Opportunities, challenges and strategies
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Creation of use of job listings 4. Employment fairs 5. Promotion of undertaking 6. Terms for young people to access credits in the solidary sector 7. Saving program for young people <p>Entertainment and culture</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special interests of today's young people <p>Case study to know their young people better</p>

Category	Obstacles or difficulties	Opportunities, challenges and strategies
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Collaborative work networks: promoting the creation of circuits of work or services between cooperatives 4. Sponsorship program between cooperatives of young people 5. Inclusion of young entrepreneurs. <p>Punctual opportunities for university or scholar cooperatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection between university and associated work cooperatives.
PARTICIPATION OF OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of awareness of the model and cooperatives of young people. 2. Beliefs that inhibit participation 	

COOPERATIVES CREATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

Category	Obstacles or difficulties	Opportunities, challenges and strategies
DEVELOPMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF COOPERATIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of awareness of operative 2. Limitations imposed by legal requirements <p>Barriers or difficulties in university or scholar cooperatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of time • Inconstancy or lack of commitment <p>Barriers or difficulties in cooperatives of associated work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working as an independent is much more complicated 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive program for the promotion of social and collective undertaking among young people. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Financial support b. Training c. Formal contact and work networks d. Resources and spaces e. Promotion 2. Managing facilities for formalization

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Youth and cooperativism in America: Cases of juvenile inclusion in the cooperative sector

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