

# Growing the Co-op Economy: Co-ops Seeding Co-ops

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COOPERATIVE  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

[www.cdi.coop](http://www.cdi.coop)

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# Seeding New Co-ops: Today's topics

- Why would a co-op develop another?
- Strategies for Seeding New Co-ops
- Resources for Planting, Sprouting, Fertilizing, Growing
- Preparing the Seedbed
- Go Garden!

# Why Do Co-ops Seed New Co-ops?

- Co-op Principles & Values
- Mission
- Vision
- Member needs
- Benefits to organization

# Co-op Principles and Values: Hanover



THEY ROCK! THEY ROLL! THEY'RE THE BAND THAT GETS ALONG! GET READY FOR ...

# COOPERATION

Presented by  
6TH PRINCIPLE

# AMONG COOPERATIVES

Now playing live at your local co-op

[coopsrock.coop](http://coopsrock.coop)

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# Mission: Arizmendi Association

- Develop as many dignified, decently-paid (“living wage” or better) work opportunities as possible through the development of new cooperatives
- Create work environments that foster profound personal as well as professional growth
- Exhibit excellence in production and serving our local communities
- Promote cooperative economic democracy as a sustainable and human option for our society

# Vision: Weaver Street Market

“We’re dreamers at Weaver Street Market.

We dream of an economically vibrant, environmentally sustainable, cooperative community center where our owners can buy healthy food, gather for fun, and find rewarding employment.

*This vision informs all of our decisions, from where we buy and what we sell, to how we can support other organizations in our community.”*

# Member Needs: Maine Organic Milling

“The relationship between Maine Organic Milling and Organic Valley ... offers an example of two cooperatives *working together for mutual benefit* and to fulfill their common mission. We’re delighted to have been able to support and assist in the formation of Maine Organic Milling and think it can play an important role in improving the *profitability and security* of Maine’s organic farmers.”

--Lowell Rheinheimer, farm resources manager for Organic Valley

# Strategies for seeding a new co-op

- What needs could best be met by a new cooperative?
- What opportunities could be realized by a new cooperative?



# Go Up & Down Supply Chain



# Organic Valley and Maine Organic Milling



Photos:  
Daryn Slover/Sun Journal

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# Spin off a business function



# Examples

- Inkworks Press & Design Action Collective
- Hanover Co-op & its commissary kitchen; Weaver Street Market & its Food House



# Meet related or unrelated member needs



# Weaver Street

- Panzanella restaurant opened early 2000
- Weaver Community Housing Association 2002
- WCOM community radio station 200



# New product with same technology



# New product with same technology





# New uses for same product



# Reproduce

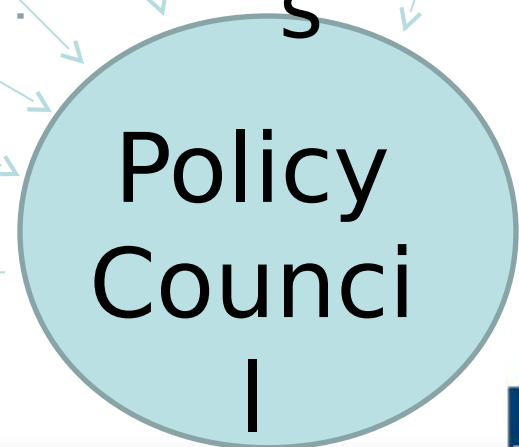


# Arizmendi Association



4% of Revenue  
25% of Profit \$  
Whichever is  
lower

Director  
s



**Plan**

# Prepare the Seedbed

- Leadership and vision to explore
- how seeding new co-ops advances your mission
  - how building a cooperative economy supports the success of the your core business and benefits its members
  - potential barriers, problems and concerns and address them
  - the many ways your co-op can encourage new co-op development

# Begin by Cultivating Commitment...

- Discuss at Board, staff and member meetings
- Educate
  - Share inspiring stories at meetings, on posters, in newsletters, on your web site and face book page.
  - Cite research about the success of cooperatives that operate in clusters and other supportive environments.
- Engage members, board and staff in identifying seeds; assessing feasibility; exploring partnerships; gathering resources and making decisions as to which seeds to sow
- Make sure managers, members and directors are on board—identify and address reservations
- Adopt as policy; integrate into mission; articulate as vision.

# Resources for Seeding Co-ops

- Pre-business financial support
- Capital
- Management and technical expertise
- Industry knowledge and networks
- Reputation
- Space
- Co-op Development Centers
- Member leadership groups
- Services
- Act as a friendly buyer/supplier
- Education about options
- Feasibility studies
- Business plans
- Member surveys
- Used equipment
- And so on!

# Go Garden....

- Who needs to be involved?
- What resources does your co-op have? will you need? where to find? how to engage?
- How will your co-op build commitment to seed new co-ops?
- How will your co-op discover possible seeds?
- How will your co-op choose which seeds to nurture?
- What partnerships will you create?

# Thank You!

Give us a call or drop us a line to discuss how to start your cooperative garden and make it grow.

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